

St. Lawrence County Public Health Department: Urges Mosquito Precautions

West Nile Virus has been identified

October 6, 2017 – The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department continues to urge all residents to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and reduce areas for breeding of mosquitoes on their property. West Nile Virus has been identified in a horse from St. Lawrence County in the Town of Massena.

To date there has been one confirmed human case and two confirmed mammalian cases of West Nile Virus in St. Lawrence County for 2017.

Our residents are advised to take steps to reduce the number of mosquitoes around a home or property, eliminate standing water in yards, and make sure all windows and doors have screens that are in good repair. In addition, New Yorkers are urged to:

- Dispose of used tires, tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar containers in which water collects.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors. Make sure roof gutters drain properly and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use, and change the water in bird baths twice a week.
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds. Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.

The County Department of Health recommends that individuals should continue to protect themselves when outdoors by using an effective mosquito repellent and wearing long pants and long sleeves. The Department recommends applying insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Insect repellants containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under 3, and products containing DEET should not be used on infants under two months. For children older than 2 months, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends products containing 10 percent to 30 percent DEET. Ten percent DEET provides protection for about 2 hours and 30 percent protects for about 5 hours. Choose the lowest concentration that will provide the required length of coverage. It is important to always follow the label directions when using insect repellent.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is most commonly transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. You can reduce your risk of being infected with WNV by using insect repellent and wearing protective clothing to prevent mosquito bites. There are no medications to treat or vaccines to prevent WNV infection. Fortunately, most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. About 1 in 5 people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms. Less than 1% of infected people develop a serious, sometimes fatal, neurologic illness. More information on West Nile virus is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>

More information about Mosquito bite prevention is available from the CDC:

http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/pdfs/fs_mosquito_bite_prevention_us.pdf