

West Nile Virus Confirmed in Mosquitoes from Wilmington

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes collected from Wilmington, Massachusetts on August 7, 2012 in the Dublin Avenue wetland area.

The specific type of mosquito tested was a *Culiseta melanura*, which is primarily a bird-biter but will occasionally bite mammals (including humans) as well.

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state, and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe infection.

The Wilmington Board of Health would like to remind residents that by taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent.

Clothing Can Help reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing light colored long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Persons who find themselves outside at dusk and other times of high mosquito activity should continue to protect themselves from bites by wearing long pants and long sleeved shirts, and using a mosquito repellent with DEET; always follow the label on the repellent.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water – Many mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, children's toys and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

The Town of Wilmington will continue our spraying program conducted by the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control, with additional spraying to be done on Thursday evening August 16, 2012.

Information about WNV and reports of current and historical WNV virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the MDPH website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv>, or you can call the Board of Health at 978-658-4298, or boh@town.wilmington.ma.us or by visiting http://wilmingtonma.virtualltownhall.net/Pages/WilmingtonMA_Health/index or <http://www.cmmcp.org/WILMINGTON2012.htm>