



CITY of NORTHAMPTON

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Municipal Building ~ 212 Main Street ~ Northampton, MA 01060
Phone (413)587-1214 ~ Fax (413)587-1221
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/245/Health>



City of Northampton Public Health Notice

West Nile Virus (WNV) Confirmed in Mosquitoes Collected from Northampton

DATE: August 22, 2018
CONTACT: Merridith O'Leary, R.S., Director of Public Health, City of Northampton
(413) 587-1214

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced yesterday that more West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquito samples collected from Northampton and across the State.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is raising the risk level for West Nile Virus (WNV) from low to moderate in every Massachusetts city and town and urges residents to take precautions against mosquito bites.

To date, there have been no reported human WNV cases in Massachusetts but August and September have the highest risk levels. The hot, humid weather in Massachusetts combined with frequent heavy rainfall has provided perfect conditions for mosquito species carrying WNV to breed.

WNV is a disease which is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While the majority of people who become infected the virus will have minor flu-like symptoms, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk of developing severe illness with symptoms that include; high fever, vomiting, neck stiffness, headache, and swollen lymph glands. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state, and are found in urban as well as more rural areas.

Helpful suggestions to protect yourself and loved ones are below, and now is the time in the season to make these precautions part of your outdoor routine. Late July through September is usually the period of greatest risk of contracting WNV in Western Massachusetts.

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.
- **Wear proper clothing and avoid fragrances** - Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks that are light in color when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin and make you less of a target. Mosquitoes see dark colors like blue and black more easily than light colors like tan and white. Likewise, fragrances attract mosquitoes, so it's best to avoid perfumes and scented products when heading outdoors.
- **Apply Insect Repellent** - Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.

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, 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 Northampton Health Department will continue to monitor the situation, work closely with MDPH and other agencies and continue to update and educate the public. Information about Arbovirus disease, surveillance, and reports of current and historical mosquito borne disease or virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases> or by calling (617) 983-6800.