

## **Hunterdon County Increases Mosquito Control Activities And Provides Safety Tips In Response To West Nile Virus Case**

In response to the New Jersey Department of Health's confirmation of the state's first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2019 in a Hunterdon County, the County Department of Health has announced that it is increasing surveillance and mosquito abatement activities.

Hunterdon County Health Officer Karen DeMarco stated, "The County Health Department, earlier this week, interviewed the infected individual to determine a travel history and other risk factors. Although it appears the case may have acquired West Nile Virus out of county or out of state, it is important for all residents to avoid mosquito bites to prevent West Nile Virus.

It is important to note that the disease cannot spread from person to person.

Tadhgh Rainey, the Mosquito and Vector Control Division Head said, "The County routinely tests mosquito samples throughout the County, and no samples have tested positive for West Nile Virus in the 2019 season."

The Hunterdon County Health Department recommends the following:

- Mosquitos can breed in a small amount of standing water.
- Eliminate standing water on your property and in your neighborhood.
- Empty bird baths at least once a week and be vigilant about clearing water from toys, garbage cans, flower pots and other areas where water will collect.
- Detailed guidance for mosquito-proofing your yard are available at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/vectorborne.shtml>.
- Use insect repellants when outdoors, especially in the evening hours.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those with DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These products can be used on skin or clothing. **ALWAYS** follow the directions on the product label.

- Additionally, Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

West Nile virus is a viral infection that is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Anyone can get infected with the West Nile virus. The virus can affect anyone bitten by an infected mosquito.

People over the age of 50 and people with weak immune systems are at greater risk of developing severe illness. Many people infected with West Nile virus do not become ill and may not develop symptoms. Mild symptoms include flu-like illness, and more severe cases include high fever, neck stiffness and swelling of the brain (encephalitis) which can lead to coma, convulsions and death.

For more information about Communicable Disease Prevention and Mosquito and Vector Control, visit the Hunterdon County Health Department website at <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/health.html> and follow them on Facebook.