



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2015

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Maryland Steps Up Mosquito Spraying as Possible Case of West Nile Virus is Reported

The Maryland Department of Agriculture notified the City of Bowie late yesterday that a Bowie resident may have contracted West Nile Virus. At this point the case has not been confirmed, and it is not known where the individual came into contact with the infected mosquito. However, out of an abundance of caution, since the individual lives in the Somerset neighborhood of Bowie, all streets in Somerset and other nearby streets will be sprayed for mosquitoes on Tuesday, September 1st, weather permitting. Spraying will also take place in other Bowie neighborhoods with known mosquito problems.

State health officials announced on August 19, 2015 that the first confirmed case of an individual with West Nile Virus was in the Baltimore area. West Nile has been detected in mosquito pools in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and other parts of Prince George's County. A mosquito pool is a group of mosquitoes collected at one of several trap sites across the state.

Health officials recommend that the best way to avoid getting West Nile virus is to eliminate places where mosquitoes breed and prevent mosquito bites. Bowie residents are encouraged to read the following information about West Nile Virus and how to prevent it. The information comes from the Centers for Disease Control, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Prevention Facts

Don't give mosquitoes a foothold. They only need a couple of inches of water to breed.

- Empty out kiddie pools.
- Change pet water daily.
- Change bird baths weekly.
- Fix outside dripping faucets.
- Clean gutters and downspouts so water runs freely.
- Check that screens are intact and do not contain holes. Repair as necessary.
- Remove anything in your yard that can be a place where water collects or empty it regularly (Pools, ponds, or other areas where water is circulated regularly are not likely to become breeding grounds.)

- Report problem areas to the City of Bowie Public Works Department (301-809-2336) or the Maryland Department of Agriculture (301-422-5080).
- The Maryland Department of Agriculture may take the following actions when it receives a complaint about mosquitoes in Bowie:
 - Set a trap or do a mosquito count in the reported area.
 - If the numbers of mosquitoes meet their threshold for action, the area will be sprayed on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. according to the schedule at www.cityofbowie.org/mosquitoes.

Be sensible when you go outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk

- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent and follow the instructions on the product label. Repellents containing DEET are safe for use by adults and children when used according to package directions.
- Wear long, loose fitting, light colored clothing.
- Avoid mosquito prone areas between dusk and dawn.
- Use/repair screens on windows and doors.

Health Effects Facts

- Most people (80%) infected with the West Nile Virus will not show any symptoms.
- People who do develop the illness will usually have any combination of fever headache, body aches, skin rash, and swollen lymph glands. These symptoms generally appear two to 14 days following the bite of an infected mosquito. Less than 1 percent of people exposed to the virus will develop more severe infections, with symptoms such as headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis.
- People who are 50 years and older, or have compromised immune systems have the greatest risk of West Nile Virus infection.
- **Febrile illness in some people** – About 1 in 5 people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash.
- **Severe symptoms in a few people** – less than 1% of people who are infected will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of neurologic illness can include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, seizures or paralysis.

Disease Facts

- West Nile Virus has been detected in all lower 48 states.
- Outbreaks have been occurring every summer since 1999.
- Most people are infected from June through September.
- Historically late August and early September are the peak times for West Nile Virus.
- West Nile Virus is generally not transmitted person-to-person, although there are a few rare documented cases where a nursing mother has passed the disease on to her child.

More Resources

- www.cityofbowie.org/mosquitoes
- http://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/mosquito_control.aspx
- www.cdc.gov/westnile