



## Northeast District Department of Health

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### PRESS RELEASE

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### **NDDH Warns of Mosquito-Transmitted Illness**

State Reports First West Nile Virus-Positive Mosquito Pools of Season

BROOKLYN – The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program (MMP) announced that mosquitoes trapped in Darien, Fairfield, New Haven, and Stamford on July 18 and 19 tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). These results represent the first WNV positive mosquitoes identified in the state by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) this year. Connecticut residents are reminded to protect themselves from mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases.

“The first West Nile virus positive mosquitoes of the season have been identified,” said Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. “Warm weather and high humidity provides ideal conditions for mosquito activity and West Nile virus transmission. We anticipate further build-up of the virus from now through September.”

These first WNV-positive mosquitoes are prompting the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) to pro-actively remind residents to take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

“West Nile virus is the most common mosquito-borne disease in the United States and reemerges every summer in Connecticut, said NDDH Director of Health Susan Starkey.”  
“WNV can cause severe disease in humans. To help residents lower their risk of acquiring mosquito-borne illnesses, NDDH developed the *SWAT* campaign that offers tips to avoid being bitten.”

*SWAT* is an easy acronym to remember to prevent mosquito bites:

- *Screens* on doors and windows should be tight-fitting and in good repair; also use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.
- *Wear* shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are more active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- *Apply* EPA-approved insect repellent according to instructions when going outdoors and minimize time outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- *Toss* any standing water that may be collecting on your property. Water in wading pools, bird baths, buckets, barrels, flowerpots, pet dishes, and tire swings should be changed or emptied regularly. Clogged roof gutters should be cleaned.

“These simple steps can help you reduce the risk for you and people you care about,” said Starkey.

West Nile virus has been detected in Connecticut every year since it was introduced into North America in 1999. Last season, WNV was detected in 208 mosquito pools from 43 towns among all eight Connecticut counties. Six confirmed human cases of WNV infection were also reported from Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven Counties.

### **Connecticut Mosquito Management Program**

The response to mosquito transmitted diseases in Connecticut is a collaborative inter-agency effort involving the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Connecticut (UCONN). These agencies are responsible for monitoring mosquito populations and the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 108 mosquito-trapping stations in 88 municipalities throughout the state. CAES begins mosquito trapping and testing in June and continues into October. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the [CAES website](#).

For information on WNV and other mosquito-borne diseases, what can be done to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes, the latest mosquito test results and human infections, visit the [Connecticut Mosquito Management Program website](#).