



Northeast District Department of Health

69 South Main Street, Unit 4, Brooklyn, CT 06234
860-774-7350 / Fax 860-774-1308 www.nddh.org

PRESS RELEASE

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Contacts: Susan Starkey, MPH, MS, RD, Director of Health

860-774-7350 x. 119 / sstarkey@nddh.org

Linda J. Colangelo, Education and Communications Coordinator

860-774-7350 x. 114 / lcolangelo@nddh.org

West Nile Virus-Positive Mosquitoes Identified in Woodstock

NDDH Provides Prevention Tips to Avoid Mosquito-Transmitted Illness

BROOKLYN – The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) has identified West Nile virus (WNV) infected mosquitoes in 17 Connecticut towns this season: Branford, Bridgeport, Darien, Fairfield, Greenwich, Hartford, Ledyard, Milford, New Canaan, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford, Wallingford, West Haven, Westport, and Woodstock. There are no reported human cases of WNV so far this season.

“We are seeing a sharp rise in the numbers of mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus, especially in coastal Fairfield and New Haven counties and in the metropolitan Hartford area,” said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. “We anticipate further geographic spread and build-up of West Nile virus in mosquitoes, with increased risk of human infection, from now through September.”

With the identification of West Nile Virus-positive mosquitoes in northeast CT, the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) is reminding 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, so this news was expected,” 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. No human or horse cases have been reported with WNV-associated illnesses acquired in Connecticut this season. One hundred seventy-three human cases of West Nile virus, including four fatalities, have been reported in Connecticut residents since 2000.

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](#).