



COUNTY OF DELAWARE
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For Immediate Release
06/07/10
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Don't be bugged by West Nile virus

*Delaware County conducts mosquito surveillance/control program
to protect residents against threat of West Nile virus*

Delaware County Council and the Department of Intercommunity Health Coordination continue to be proactive in addressing West Nile virus through a mosquito surveillance and control program in the county.

For the eleventh consecutive year, Delaware County has received a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental (DEP) protection to conduct a mosquito surveillance and control program in Delaware County, and to prevent the potential public health effects of the West Nile virus on county residents. The County partners with the Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension to provide program services from April through October, which is the high season for mosquito activity. By October the first frost of the year will kill off the mosquito population.

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis, a brain inflammation. Infected mosquitoes pass the virus onto birds, animals and people. West Nile virus was first detected in North America in 1999 in New York, and in Pennsylvania in 2000. There were no reported cases of West Nile virus in humans in Delaware County in 2009.

There are three main components to the county's West Nile virus program: surveillance and control, monitoring human cases through the state Department of Health, and public education related to elimination of standing water and personal protective measures.

The Penn State Cooperative Extension staff will set traps and monitor mosquito activity. They will look for areas where mosquitoes breed and, when there is a high number of mosquitoes found in the trap, they might spray.

Spraying would only occur if high numbers of mosquitoes are detected, or if mosquitoes test positive for West Nile Virus. However, the best prevention is to have residents eliminate standing water on private properties, which reduces the breeding.

(more)

(West Nile continued)

The first mosquito to test positive with West Nile Virus in Pennsylvania in 2010 was reported on June 3 in Lancaster County.

The West Nile virus infects certain wild birds, usually crows. Reporting dead birds is a good way to identify West Nile virus activity in an area so control measures can minimize the spread of the virus. People can report a dead crow, hawk or blue jay to the Department of Environmental Protection online at <http://www.westnile.state.pa.us>. Residents can also call the Department of Intercommunity Health Coordination at (610) 891-5311 and the staff will report the bird to the state.

Residents who have health questions related to West Nile virus can call (877) PA-HEALTH.

Residents of Delaware County are urged to protect themselves from West Nile virus.

- Do not have standing water on property. Fill in any ruts and make sure that all gutters and drainpipes work properly. Get rid of anything that can collect water, such as cans, buckets, or old tires. Keep ornamental ponds filtered and stocked with fish. Empty bird baths every 3 to 4 days.
- Make sure that all windows and screens are tight in homes, so no mosquitoes can get through.
- When outdoors, wear long shirts and pants and use an insect repellent containing DEET. Avoid mosquito-breeding areas such as marshes or ponds during peak mosquito hours, which are dusk, dawn, and after a rainstorm.
- For information about West Nile virus, visit the Pennsylvania West Nile Virus Control Program Web site at www.westnile.state.pa.us. People can also get information on the Delaware County government Web site at www.co.delaware.pa.us and go to the Department of Intercommunity Health Coordination or call (610) 891-5311.