

# Macon County Health Department



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 23, 2015**

## **Confirmed Report of West Nile Virus in Mosquito Batches in Macon County**

DECATUR, IL—The Macon County Health Department has received confirmation of 19 mosquito batches positive for West Nile Virus collected by the Macon Mosquito Abatement District (MMAD). Adult samples were RAMP (Rapid Analyte Measurement Platform) tested by the District, followed by confirmation from Prairie View Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

According to Jackie Evans-Moser, Director of MMAD, the increase in positives mosquitoes is due to abundant rainfall, heat, and a history of West Nile Virus transmitters in Macon County. These numbers tend to show a correlation with increased risk for human cases. There are currently no human cases in Macon County and no human cases in Illinois as of July 21, 2015. MMAD is out in the district daily treating areas of standing water for mosquito larvae and surveying areas that might be overlooked for mosquito breeding. If you are aware of an area that has standing water for three (3) or more days, please call MMAD at (217) 875-2722 so they can investigate or refer you to the right agency.

Carol Carlton, Director of Clinical Nursing Services at the Macon County Health Department, states that the Macon County Health Department began its seasonal campaign for West Nile Virus in May 2015. The campaign informs residents about prevention and encourages them to get rid of any standing water around their homes and to use insect repellent when mosquitoes are out. Many residents believe that if mosquitoes are not visible, there is no risk. However, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, the mosquitoes that typically carry West Nile Virus, commonly called the house mosquito, are not as noticeable as the swarms of floodwater mosquitoes we see during rainy summers. Even if it does not look like there are a lot of mosquitoes out, house mosquitoes are stealthy biters and their virus infection rate is increasing rapidly, so residents should always use insect repellent.

The Macon County Health Department also conducts surveillance of West Nile Virus in dead birds, which are fully intact without decomposition or bugs. If you find a dead bird please call the Health Department at (217) 423-6988 ext: 1134 to report it.

Kathy Wade, Director of Environmental Health at the Macon County Health Department, stated, “The surveillance of birds and mosquitoes provides an early warning. I urge residents to protect themselves and their family while outside when mosquitoes are biting. Most people who are bit by a mosquito carrying West Nile Virus may have very mild symptoms; however, in some people over the age of 50 and those with chronic health conditions, the illness can be more severe.” She reminds the public that personal protection is the first

line of defense against West Nile Virus or other mosquito illnesses. The following tips can help to reduce your risk of being bitten by a mosquito:

- **STAY** indoors at dawn, dusk and in the early evening when mosquitoes are most active. If you go outdoors, wear shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.
- **USE** insect repellent containing 25-35% DEET when outdoors, applied sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the repellent label. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that repellents used on children contain no more than 10% DEET, the active ingredient in mosquito repellents. Consult your physician before using repellents on young children or infants.
- **MAKE** sure window and door screens are “bug tight.”

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