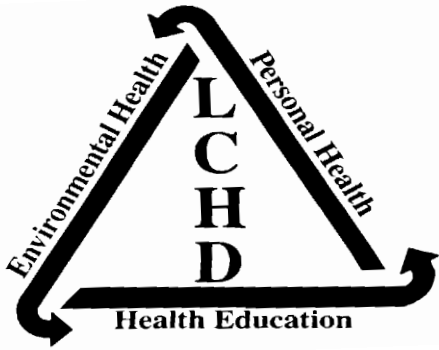


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 27, 2021
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
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For Immediate Release

“Additional Bird Tests Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that a crow from Streator tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird was collected and tested on August 27, 2021.

Environmental Health staff was able to conduct the confirmatory test on the bird at the Health Department. To date, the following West Nile virus activity has been documented for 2021:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
OTTAWA	08/25/2021	MOSQUITOES
UTICA	08/26/2021	CROW
STREATOR	08/27/2021	CROW

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex pipiens* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, which has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

According to Chris Pozzi, Director of Environmental Health, “The number of positive test results this week indicate that the amount of virus circulating has increased considerably. In addition, the hot, dry

-More-

conditions will enable the virus to continue to thrive. We are entering the peak risk period for West Nile infections and that risk won't subside until later in the fall when we begin to experience cooler weather. I encourage everyone to check the area around their homes and empty any containers that may be holding water from the rain we received this week and to wear their insect repellent when enjoying time outdoors."

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to *Fight the Bite*. Precautions include practicing the three "R's" – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecounty.org. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>.

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