

News Release

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More mosquitoes found with West Nile Virus in Knox County

Continued trapping and testing of mosquitoes in Knox County has resulted in more mosquitoes being positively identified with West Nile Virus (WNV). The latest infected insects were found in mosquito traps placed in Fredericktown in mid-August. This is the second time mosquitoes with WNV have been found in Fredericktown which also yielded positive tests from traps placed in late July.

Gambier and the Apple Valley area of Howard were also identified in early August as having mosquitoes with WNV, but traps set recently in those areas came back negative.

Nate Overholt, environmental health director with the Knox County Health Department said the agency has been spraying pesticide in the areas where the positive mosquitoes were trapped, plus in additional areas of the county. The agency is also providing larvicide to treat areas of standing water.

“We will continue to spray for mosquitoes whenever the weather permits,” said Overholt. Spraying takes place in the evenings and can be delayed or cancelled due to bad weather conditions including rain, wind or low temperature.

“Unfortunately, we can’t kill every mosquito with pesticide,” said Overholt. “The public also needs to help with prevention efforts including using insect repellent when they are outside and getting rid of standing water around their homes.”

When it comes to standing water, no amount is too small. “Mosquitoes need just a small amount of water to lay their eggs which hatch in just a day or two.” said Overholt. “That’s why it’s important to get rid of standing water on a regular basis.”

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Page 2 –More mosquitoes found with West NileVirus in Knox County

With rain expected throughout Ohio in the next week, there are likely to be lots of areas of standing water.

Common mosquito habitats include: tires, buckets, cans, bottles, plastic containers, pet food containers and water dishes, planters and pots, including saucers and catch trays. Bird baths should be drained and refilled every 3-4 days.

So far this year, 36 Ohio counties have recorded positive tests for WNV. Statewide trapping and testing is conducted by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and local health departments. There have been seven reports of WNV in humans

WNV can cause an infection in humans that can lead to encephalitis. Most people who become infected with WNV do not have any symptoms. About one in five people who become infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. There is no specific treatment for WNV infection, and care is based on symptoms.

Mosquitoes are likely to be biting between dusk and dawn. “If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear repellent with DEET,” advised Overholt. “Cover up by wearing shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Also, wear light colors. They are less attractive to mosquitoes.”

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