

## City of Milwaukee Health Department

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### **WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY** **\*TWO BIRDS TESTED POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS\***

Milwaukee, WI – The City of Milwaukee Health Department has been notified by the State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health this afternoon that two crows found in Milwaukee County have tested positive for West Nile Virus. This represents the first findings of WNV in Wisconsin. Most recently, West Nile Virus infection has been detected in birds found in Detroit, MI and Indianapolis, IN.

The above tests were conducted as part of a statewide surveillance program being conducted by the Division of Public Health. To date, there have been no human cases of WNV infection detected in Wisconsin.

West Nile Virus is transmitted to humans through a bite from an infected mosquito. The virus is NOT transmitted person to person. Most persons bitten by an infected mosquito have no symptoms or only experience mild illness that may include headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes and fever. Onset of symptoms is usually between 5-15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Less than 1% of persons infected with West Nile Virus develop severe illness. Symptoms of severe infection include confusion, disorientation, brain swelling and severe muscle weakness or paralysis.

While the risk of West Nile Virus infection to Milwaukee County residents is low, personal measures to protect against mosquito bites is warranted. These include:

- Avoid outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes tend to be most active
- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants when outdoors
- Use mosquito repellent when outdoors

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- Ensure that screens, windows and doors are in good repair to prevent entry of mosquitoes
- Eliminate stagnant water around the home that may serve as mosquito-breeding places including water in birdbaths, wading pools, old tires, buckets, etc.

As a result of the above findings, the State Division of Public Health is planning to expand statewide surveillance activities with regard to suspect human cases as well as increased testing of sick and dead birds. The Milwaukee Health Department will work closely with the State in tracking reports of infected birds along with investigation of suspected human cases in Milwaukee County.

To report sick or dead crows and blue jays in Milwaukee County, contact WDNR wildlife biologist Tami Ryan at 414-263-8710. For more information on WNV, visit the Wisconsin Division of Public Health website at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/healthtips/BCD/WestNile.htm> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

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