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BOARD OF HEALTH

West Nile Virus Confirmed in Mosquito from Westminister

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced September 27, 2023 that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected from a single mosquito. The positive sample came from one mosquito in the South West Quadrant of Westminister. At this time, a specific address/area of origin has not been identified beyond the South West Quadrant. In 2022, 5,737 mosquito samples were tested for WNV and 95 samples were positive. Westminister had 0 WNV positive mosquito samples identified in 2022.

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe infection.

The risk level in Westminister is **low** as indicated by the September 27, 2023 Risk Level Map. Please check this link for updated risk levels: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update>

By taking a few, common sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **Apply Insect Repellent** when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **permethrin**, **picaridin** (KBR 3023), **IR3535** or **oil of lemon eucalyptus** [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.
- **Clothing Can Help** reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours** - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. When risk is increased, consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water** – Many mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens** - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all your windows and doors.

Westminister will continue to work closely with the MDPH and other agencies, and will notify the public with information as it becomes available to us.

Information about WNV and reports of current and historical WNV virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the MDPH website at: www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito.

September 27, 2023