
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Confirmed in Four Human Cases – Suspected in One Other

Grand Rapids – The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) is tracking five separate cases of West Nile Virus. Four adults have tested positive for the virus and one other is suspected of having the illness. All five are Kent County residents. It is unknown where they contracted the disease.

With weather forecasters predicting unseasonably warm temperatures this weekend it is likely that people will be spending more time outdoors.

“People need to know that mosquitoes are still quite active this time of year,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD. “It continues to be important that people take measures to protect themselves from being bitten.”

The best treatment for WNV is prevention. The Kent County Health Department recommends wearing a mosquito repellent that contains 10 – 35% DEET, wearing light colored clothing and staying indoors during dusk. You can help stop mosquitoes from breeding by removing any standing water in your yard and keeping your lawn and shrubs cut.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is spread to people primarily through the bites of an infected Culex species mosquito. While this species is known to transmit WNV it is not known to transmit Zika virus. WNV is not contagious from person to person.

WNV symptoms range from a slight headache and low grade fever to, in rare cases, swelling of the brain tissue that can result in death.

West Nile Virus remains a threat anytime mosquitoes are active. Frequently the “first frost” is not harsh enough to eliminate all mosquitoes.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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