
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Found in Mosquitoes

West Nile Virus is present in Kent County. People can take simple steps to protect themselves.

GRAND RAPIDS – Through ongoing surveillance and testing the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has discovered mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus in three zip codes 49548, 49507 and 49504. While these are the only three positive tests so far in 2018, the findings should serve as a reminder to all who live in West Michigan that the West Nile virus season is upon us and will remain until after the first frost.

“Given our experience, we fully expect to find West Nile virus every year through our surveillance,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD. “We then share this knowledge with the appropriate municipalities, so they can make more informed decisions about mosquito control.”

West Nile Virus is spread primarily by infected Culex mosquitoes. Only about 20% of the people infected will notice symptoms that may include headache, body aches, joint pains and fatigue. Most people with this type of West Nile virus completely recover, but fatigue may last for weeks or even months. About 1 in 150 people infected develop severe illness that can affect the central nervous system. Recovery from this type of West Nile virus may take several months. Some damage to the central nervous system can be permanent. In rare instances the disease can lead to death.

Since there is no vaccine or cure for West Nile the best treatment is prevention. KCHD 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 or refreshing water in bird baths, children’s wading pools, water bowls for your pets. Empty other small containers that can collect water in your yard and keeping your lawn and shrubs trimmed. More information about prevention can be found [here](#).

https://www.accesskent.com/Health/CommDisease/pdfs/westnile_qa.pdf

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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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