
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Surveillance Results Concern Health Officials

Kent County and State testing shows abnormally high numbers of mosquitoes West Nile Virus

GRAND RAPIDS – Ongoing mosquito surveillance conducted by the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) is revealing an unusually high number of trapped mosquitoes testing positive for West Nile virus. While there are no human cases reported in Kent County yet this year, these tests lead health experts at KCHD to believe that a rise in human cases is possible in 2018.

“Given the test results we are seeing, it may be more important now than ever to take steps to protect yourself and those who count on you from being bit.” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD. “We are urging people to take simple precautions to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes and the risk of West Nile virus.”

There is no vaccine or cure for West Nile. The best treatment is prevention.

KCHD recommends the following:

Applying insect repellent that contains the active DEET and always following the manufacturer’s directions for use on the label.

Draining standing water in the yard. Empty water from flower pots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, buckets, barrels, and cans. Anywhere water can collect, mosquitoes can breed.

Avoid being outside at dusk and dawn when mosquito activity is high.

Wear light colored long-sleeved shirts and long pants

More information about prevention can be found [here](#).

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

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. West Nile can develop into a severe illness that can affect the central nervous system. Some damage to the central nervous system can be permanent. In rare instances the disease can lead to death.

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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.