
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional information contact:

Steve Kelso at (616) 632-7274 or Steve.Kelso@kentcountymi.gov

West Nile Virus Claims Life of Kent County Resident

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has learned that a Kent County resident who was hospitalized with West Nile Virus has died due to complications of the illness.

As the Labor Day weekend holiday approaches, KCHD wants people to know that it is vital to continue to protect themselves from the bite of a mosquito.

Through surveillance, KCHD has noted a 400% increase in the number of Culex Mosquitoes trapped by the agency so far this summer. The Culex mosquito is the species that transmits West Nile Virus to humans. KCHD believes these increased numbers may signal higher numbers of human West Nile Virus cases for the 2018 season.

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 ingredient 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.

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. 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.

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

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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.

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503