
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



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West Nile Virus Found During Kent County Mosquito Surveillance

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – West Nile virus has been detected in tested mosquitoes in Kent County. This finding is not a human case. The discovery was made during ongoing surveillance and testing conducted by the Kent County Health Department (KCHD). The discovery comes after testing pools of mosquitos that were trapped by KCHD in the 49506 ZIP code.

“This discovery is important because it lets us know that this season’s mosquitoes are now carrying the virus and it could spread to humans,” said Paul Bellamy, Public Health Epidemiologist at KCHD. “It is important for people to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites as much as possible.”

Since there is no vaccine or cure for West Nile virus, the best treatment is prevention. KCHD recommends the following measures:

- Wear a mosquito repellent that contains 10 to 35 percent DEET (read and follow product directions)
- Wear light colored clothing and stay indoors during dusk to reduce your risk of being bitten
- Remove or refresh water in bird baths, children’s wading pools, water bowls for your pets, and empty other small containers that can collect water in your yard.

More information about prevention can be found at:

<https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Environmental/vector.htm>.

West Nile virus is spread primarily by infected Culex mosquitoes. Only about 20 percent of the people infected will notice symptoms that may include headache, body aches, joint pains, and fatigue. Most people with West Nile virus completely recover, but fatigue may linger. About 1 in 150 people infected develop severe illness that can affect the central nervous system. Recovery from 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.

This release has been issued in a timely manner as a public health notification, it will be available in Spanish at:

<https://www.accesskent.com/News/>

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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 260 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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