



Precautions urged after West Nile virus found in Cabarrus County, NC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kannapolis, N.C. – Cabarrus Health Alliance, October 21, 2024 – The NC State Laboratory of Public Health identified West Nile virus (WNV) in mosquitoes collected by Cabarrus Health Alliance Environmental Health staff on October 11, 2024. Testing was completed on October 18, 2024. The presence of positive mosquitoes indicates that the risk of West Nile Virus remains into the fall months.

Cabarrus Health Alliance reminds people to take precautions against mosquito bites following these recent reports of West Nile virus in mosquitoes.

The type of mosquitoes collected are responsible for circulating West Nile virus in the wild bird population and transmitting it to humans. Cabarrus Health Alliance Environmental Health staff monitors known West Nile virus mosquito vectors to identify West Nile virus activity throughout the summer and fall transmission season.

Individuals should take steps to minimize their exposure to mosquitoes during outside activities the remainder of the fall season, especially during dusk and dawn. Below are tips to help eliminate mosquito breeding and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne disease:

- Use the tip and toss method after every rainfall. Tip out water in flowerpots, planters, children's toys, wading pools, buckets and any containers that can hold water, even a small amount, including saucers under flower pots.
- When possible, drain any standing water on your property such as puddles and ditches that hold water for more than four days after rain.
- In containers that cannot be drained or dumped, treat with a product to kill the larvae. Samples of the product can be picked up for free at Cabarrus Health Alliance (300 Mooresville Rd. Kannapolis, NC 28081) Monday through Friday 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.
- Store out-of-service or un-mounted tires under cover to prevent the collection of any water.
- Change the water in bird baths and pet bowls at least twice a week.
- Keep gutters clean and in good repair, and repair leaky outdoor faucets.
- Make sure rain barrels have tight-fitting screens or lids.



- Use screened windows and doors, and make sure screens fit tightly and are not torn.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors, which also repels ticks. Remember to always follow product directions.
- Wear long sleeves and pants at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active, or stay indoors during these hours.

The young, elderly, and immunocompromised populations are at greatest risk of West Nile virus illness. There are usually no symptoms in most people who become infected with West Nile virus. About one in five people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea or rash. Most people infected with West Nile virus disease recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months. Less than 1% of people who are infected will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues). The symptoms of neurologic illness can include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, seizures, paralysis and death.

There is no vaccine for West Nile virus in people, but vaccines are available to prevent West Nile virus in horses. If you are a horse owner, consult your veterinarian regarding proper protective vaccines for your horses and change the water in water troughs at least twice a week to discourage mosquito breeding.

For more information regarding mosquitoes or mosquito control activities in your area, please contact Cabarrus Health Alliance at 704-920-1207 or visit <https://www.cabarrushealth.org/176/Mosquito-Prevention>.

Additional CDC resources: At Home Mosquito Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/mosquito-control/mosquito-control-at-home.html> and

General Mosquito Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/mosquito-control/index.html>

About Cabarrus Health Alliance: Cabarrus Health Alliance is the public health authority of Cabarrus County. Cabarrus Health Alliance is an autonomous organization providing services and programs to meet public health needs. Cabarrus Health Alliance is a leader in public health and is nationally recognized for its innovation.

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