

News



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WNV Update: Five Human Cases of WNV Reported in the State

Cases among four Bridgeport residents, one Shelton resident; all are recovering

Hartford – The State Mosquito Management Program announced today that five human cases of WNV infection have been identified in Connecticut so far this year. Four of the five cases are Bridgeport residents. The fifth case is a Shelton resident.

The five patients are all adults between 30 and 80 years of age. Onsets of illness occurred from the third week of August to the second week of September. Four of the five patients were hospitalized; all five are recovering.

Officials said that West Nile infected mosquitoes in Bridgeport were identified from August 5th through 27th.

“While the threat of virus transmission to people is subsiding, four human cases is an unusual number in one town, and we are closely monitoring the situation with the Bridgeport Health Department and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station,” said Dr. Randall Nelson, infectious disease epidemiologist with the Connecticut Department of Public Health. “We continue to remind residents of the importance of taking precautions to avoid mosquito bites.”

“In Bridgeport the numbers of West Nile virus infected mosquitoes have declined significantly during the past three weeks,” said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. “However, there is still risk of new human infections in Bridgeport and several other Connecticut towns where infected mosquitoes have been repeatedly identified, especially along the coast from New Haven to Greenwich.”

Health officials recommended the following to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

- Homeowners **and** businesses should remove standing water around their property.

- Minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

Exposure to mosquitoes and the risk of acquiring WNV infection varies by season and geographic region. In Connecticut, the risk is highest during August and September and typically subsides in October as mosquitos die off due to lower temperatures.

This season, WNV-positive mosquitoes have now been identified in 23 towns: Bridgeport, Cheshire, Chester, Darien, East Haven, Glastonbury, Greenwich, Groton, Guilford, Haddam, Hartford, Milford, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Stonington, Stratford, Waterford, West Haven, Westport, Wethersfield and Wilton. Of the 23 towns, 14 are located along Long Island Sound. Positive mosquitoes continue to be identified at various locations.

During 2014, WNV-positive mosquitoes were identified in a total of 15 towns. Six people, including two Bridgeport residents, were reported with WNV-associated illnesses. The patients were all adults between 20 and 70 years of age. Onsets of illness occurred from the third week of August to the first week of October. There were no fatalities; however, five people were hospitalized.

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. These agencies are responsible for monitoring the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday – Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at <http://www.ct.gov/caes/mosquitotesting>.

For information on West Nile and eastern equine encephalitis viruses and how to prevent mosquito bites, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program Web site at www.ct.gov/mosquito.

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