

# MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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## Erie County Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Erie, PA — The Erie County Department of Health confirms that a mosquito group collected in Harborcreek on July 7, 2021, has tested positive for West Nile virus. This is the first mosquito group to test positive in Erie County in 2021. At this time no human cases have been reported in Erie County.

Additional monitoring for mosquitoes will be done in the area where this mosquito group was collected. Appropriate control work will be conducted, depending on the number and types of mosquitoes that are found.

Certain species of mosquitoes carry West Nile virus. When transmitted to people, this virus can cause West Nile encephalitis, an infection that can result in an inflammation of the brain. Anyone can get the virus, but older adults and people with compromised immune systems have the highest risk of developing severe illness because their bodies have a harder time fighting off disease.

The public can reduce the number of mosquitoes around their home and neighborhood by eliminating standing water, in which mosquitoes can breed, by following these guidelines:

- Dispose of any refuse that can hold water — such as tin cans, containers and in particular used tires. Tires have become a prominent place for mosquito breeding in the country.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers and check uncovered junk piles.
- Clean clogged roof gutters every year and check storm drains, leaky faucets and window wells.
- Empty accumulated water from wheelbarrows, boats, cargo trailers, toys and ceramic pots. If possible, turn them over when not using them.

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- Do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths, ornamental pools, water gardens, and swimming pools or their covers. Ornamental pools can be aerated or stocked with fish. Swimming pools should be cleaned and chlorinated when not in use.
- Products such as “mosquito dunks” can be obtained from garden centers.
- Make sure window and door screens are “bug tight.”
- Use the proper type of light outside: incandescent lights attract mosquitoes, while florescent lights neither attract nor repel mosquitoes.
- Stay indoors at dawn, dusk and in the early evening when mosquitoes are most active. If you must go outdoors, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants.
- Insect repellants with DEET can be applied (sparingly) to exposed skin and will deter mosquitoes from biting. Spray thin clothing with repellent since mosquitoes can bite through it. Be sure to follow all directions on product labels.
- Mosquitoes are repelled by high winds, so electric fans may provide some relief at outdoor events.

More information is available on the website [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us).

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