

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Breanna Adams | Director, Environmental Health Services
badams@eriecountypa.gov | 814-451-6770

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 Township on July 20, 2023 has tested positive for West Nile virus. This is the fourth mosquito group to test positive in Erie County in 2023. 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.

Prevent mosquito bites with the following tips:

- Insect repellants with DEET can be applied (sparingly) to exposed skin. Spray thin clothing with repellent since mosquitoes can bite through it. Be sure to follow all directions on product labels.
- 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.
- Use the proper type of lighting outside. Incandescent lights attract mosquitoes, while florescent lights neither attract nor repel mosquitoes.
- Products such as “mosquito dunks” can be obtained from garden centers.
- Make sure window and door screens are “bug tight.”
- Mosquitoes are repelled by high winds, so electric fans may provide some relief at outdoor events.

Reduce the number of mosquitoes around homes and neighborhoods by getting rid of standing water, where mosquitoes lay their eggs.

- Dispose of any refuse that can hold water—such as tin cans, containers, and, in particular, used tires. Tires have become the most important mosquito breeding site 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.
- 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.

More information is available at dep.pa.gov.

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