For Immediate Release

West Nile Virus found in West Virginia mosquitoes

MORGANTOWN, WV (Aug. 29, 2018) — West Nile Virus (WNV) has been found in mosquitoes that were collected in North Central West Virginia and tested for disease.

No cases of WNV in humans have been reported this summer in West Virginia. “We have no disease evidence,” said Dr. Lee B. Smith, county health officer and executive director of Monongalia County Health Department. “We just know that mosquitoes have it.”

Still, it is wise to take precautions to avoid mosquitoes. MCHD has created a WNV fact sheet, with information on the illness, symptoms, how to avoid mosquitoes and more.

Eight out of 10 people who develop WNV will not exhibit symptoms. Most who do will experience headache, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea and/or rash. Most people who develop this type of WNV recover completely, although some symptoms can linger for months.

Severe illness can occur, however, especially in people over the age of 60 or those with certain medical conditions. When this happens, some effects to the central nervous system can be permanent. Also, about 1 in 10 people who develop symptoms to the central nervous system die.

To avoid mosquitoes, wear insect repellent, long sleeves and long pants when spending time outdoors. Also, eliminate standing water in buckets, flower pots, etc., around your home. If you have other standing water, such as a pond or birdbath, you can use mosquito dunks to kill mosquito larvae. MCHD Environmental Health has mosquito dunks. To request a package, call 304-598-5131 or stop by MCHD at 453 Van Voorhis Road.
West Nile Virus in humans has been reported in 37 states and in the District of Columbia. West Virginia is one of eight states where WNV has been reported in mosquitoes but not humans. All states that border West Virginia have reported HNV in humans. Five states have no reported WNV activity.

The fact sheet can be found at MCHD’s website, monchd.org, and it also has been posted to Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD. Anyone who wants a copy to print out and distribute can email MaryWade.Triplett@wv.gov.

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