



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2018

CONTACT:

Melaney Arnold – 217-558-0500

melaney.arnold@illinois.gov

First Human West Nile Virus Death In Illinois For 2018

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has confirmed the first human West Nile virus-related death in Illinois for 2018. A LaSalle County resident over 65 years who became ill during the first part of August and tested positive for West Nile virus has died.

“Although we’re moving toward the end of summer, West Nile virus remains a risk until the first hard frost,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “It’s important for everyone to continue taking precautions like using insect repellent, wearing long sleeve shirts and pants, and staying indoors between dusk and dawn.”

Last year IDPH reported the first human West Nile virus death in Illinois on September 29, 2017. During 2017, there were 90 human West Nile virus cases, including eight deaths. IDPH is currently reporting 22 human cases. West Nile virus positive results in humans, birds, mosquitoes, and/or horses have been reported in 58 counties this year.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 and immunocompromised individuals are at higher risk for severe illness.

Remember to take some simple precautions to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and protect yourself from being bitten.

- Minimize being outdoors when mosquitoes transmitting West Nile virus are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, such as old tires, buckets and other receptacles, or refresh the water in bird baths, flowerpots and wading pools every couple days.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the [IDPH website](#).

###

Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois](https://www.facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois) or follow us on Twitter [@IDPH](https://twitter.com/IDPH)

Nationally Accredited by PHAB

