



Health Department

505 Broadway Street, Suite 372
Baraboo, WI 53913

Telephone: (608) 355- 3290 Fax: (608)355-4329



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Cynthia Bodendein, Health Officer

SAUK COUNTY BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Protect Yourself against Mosquito Bites

The Sauk County Health Department reports a dead crow found in Sauk County has tested positive for West Nile virus on June 1, 2017.

“The positive bird means that residents of Sauk County need to be more vigilant in their personal protective measures to prevent mosquito bites,” Cynthia Bodendein, Health Officer/ Public Health Director said.

West Nile virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds.

“Sauk County residents should be aware of West Nile virus and take some simple steps to protect themselves against mosquito bites,” Bodendein said. “The West Nile virus seems to be here to stay, so the best way to avoid the disease is to reduce exposure to and eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitoes.”

The Sauk County Health Department recommends the following:

- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply insect repellent to clothing as well as exposed skin since mosquitoes may bite through clothing. Use products with DEET, picaridin or IR3535. Also, some oil of lemon eucalyptus (not for children <3years) and para-menthane-diol products are effective. Follow label directions.
- Permethrin can be used on clothes and camping gear; not on skin.
- Make sure window and door screens are in good repair.
- Properly dispose of items that hold water, such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or discarded tires.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools, boats and canoes when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim tall grass, weeds and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Landscape to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.

The majority of people who are infected with West Nile virus do not get sick. Those who do become ill usually experience mild symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle ache, rash and fatigue. Older adults and those with compromised immune systems are at greater risk of developing central nervous system illness that can be fatal.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has monitored the spread of West Nile virus since 2001 among wild birds, horses, mosquitoes and people. West Nile virus infections in humans have been reported from June through October.

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health will continue surveillance for West Nile virus until the end of the mosquito season. To report a sick or dead crow, blue jay or raven, please call the Dead Bird Reporting Hotline at 1-800-433-1610. However, no further dead birds will be tested from Sauk County this season.

For more information on West Nile virus:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/ArboviralDiseases/WestNileVirus/Index.htm>