

For Immediate Release

High Levels of West Nile Detected in Union County

Continued testing for West Nile Virus indicates increased levels of virus activity in all areas of Union County according to Kelly Beehler, Union County Vector Control. "Its presence has been found in mosquito, bird and equine populations," he said.

Residents are strongly encouraged to take protective measures to avoid mosquito bites. "We expect to see human cases at any time," said Amy Frederick, communicable disease nurse at CHD public health services. "Given the presence of so much virus activity, the only way to prevent disease is to consistently reduce mosquito exposure."

With increased presence of West Nile Virus, it is imperative to reduce mosquito breeding opportunities and to protect ourselves, our families and the community from mosquito bites. Lisa Ladendorff, PH Administrator, states that "We can't stress enough how important it is that people take responsibility to do their part in keeping our community healthy".

The following are suggestions for protection:

- Screen doors and windows should fit tightly. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts and other protective clothing when outside.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding such as clogged gutters, birdbaths and old tires.
- Avoid playing or working outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Repellent use, preferably one that contains DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, is advised. Follow label directions carefully. Never apply DEET directly to children or put it on children's hands. Apply repellent first to your own hands and then onto the child. Do not use oil of lemon eucalyptus on children under age three.

West Nile Virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most infected people will show little or no signs of disease. About one in five infected people may show signs of West Nile fever. Symptoms may include fever above 100°F AND severe headache, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, shaking, paralysis, or rash. It is important that you contact your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms.

Rarely, infected individuals may develop neuro-invasive disease (infection of the brain or spinal column) that can be severe or may cause death. People with impaired immune systems or those over the age of fifty are at increased risk for severe illness and should **strictly** follow the precautionary measures.

For more information access the following resources:

- State of Oregon : WNV Hotline: 866-703-4636 (toll free)
www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/wnile/wnile.shtml
- Center for Disease Control & Prevention: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/index.htm
- Oregon Department of Agriculture Animal Health & Identification Division:
www.oregon.gov/ODA/AHID/ahid_wnv.shtml

Union County Contacts:

- Union County Vector Control: 963-2974
- CHD Public Health Services: 962-8801
- Emilio DeBess DVM State Public Health Veterinarian 971-673-1111
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