

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus is Diagnosed in a Baltimore City Man

BALTIMORE, MD (September 10, 2008)— The Baltimore City Health Department announces that a Northwest Baltimore City resident is the first confirmed case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Maryland for 2008. The patient was hospitalized with a brain infection, also known as encephalitis, and is recovering from the infection. The Health Department urges residents to take necessary precautions to protect themselves.

West Nile virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. It cannot be directly transmitted from one person to another or from birds to people.

Preventative measures include:

- Avoiding areas of high mosquito infestation;
- Avoiding unnecessary outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active;
- Wearing light clothing, long pants, long-sleeved shirts and hats when outdoors; and
- Using mosquito repellants according to directions;
- Ensuring windows have screens. Repair or replace screens with holes and tears.
- Eliminating any standing water from the property, including containers that collect water.

Most individuals infected with West Nile virus will not have any symptoms. People that do develop illness will usually have any combination of the following mild symptoms: fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands. These symptoms generally appear three to 15 days following the bite of an infective mosquito.

Less than one percent of persons exposed to the virus will develop more severe infections with symptoms such as headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis. In some instances, WNV can be fatal.

Persons older than 50 years, and those who are immuno-compromised have the highest risk of developing more severe disease.

The Division of Environmental Health will conduct door-to-door canvassing in the patient's neighborhood that will include distributing educational brochures, issuing notices for standing water and dispersing larvicide as required. In addition to these activities, Environmental Health

is also involved in limited trapping and mosquito identification during the summer in response to complaints from citizens.

General information on West Nile virus can be found on the Internet at the following Web sites:

- Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, www.dhmh.state.md.us or <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/diseases/index.htm>
- Maryland Department of Agriculture, www.mda.state.md.us
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, www.dnr.state.md.us
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/index.htm>

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