



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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State Reports Expansion of West Nile Virus: Positive Mosquitoes Identified in Eight Connecticut Towns

New Haven, CT – The State Mosquito Management Program is warning Connecticut residents about the increasing risk of infection by West Nile virus (WNV) this season. So far, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) has detected WNV-infected mosquitoes in eight towns: Bridgeport, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, and Wethersfield.

“We are seeing a geographic expansion of West Nile virus activity to new towns in Connecticut,” said John Shepard, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. “We anticipate further build-up of West Nile virus in mosquitoes with increased risk of human infection from now through September.”

"The current warm weather and high humidity provide favorable conditions for the mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus," said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Chief Scientist. "We urge everyone to prevent mosquito bites by using insect repellent and covering bare skin, especially during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active."

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, residents should:

- Minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellents containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, including DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-methane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone when it is necessary to be outdoors.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are more active. Clothing should be light-colored and loose-fitting and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.

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- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect infants when outdoors.

No human or horse cases have been reported with WNV-associated illnesses acquired in Connecticut this season. One hundred eighty-one human cases of West Nile virus, including four fatalities, have been reported in Connecticut residents since 2000.

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. These agencies are responsible for monitoring the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The response to mosquito transmitted diseases in Connecticut is a collaborative inter-agency effort involving the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Connecticut (UCONN). These agencies are responsible for monitoring mosquito populations and the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 108 mosquito-trapping stations in 88 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday – Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis and then at least once a week after detection of virus. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Mosquito-Testing/Introductory/State-of-Connecticut-Mosquito-Trapping-and-Arbovirus-Testing-Program>.

For information on WNV and EEE, what can be done to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes, the latest mosquito test results and human infections, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program web site at <https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito>.

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