



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Mosquitoes, Bird Test Positive for West Nile Virus**

Knox County Health Department (KCHD) received separate lab reports today confirming the presence of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Knox County. A sample of mosquitoes, called a pool, taken from the 37914 zip code area of Knox County and a bird turned in by law enforcement from the same zip code have both tested positive for the virus. WNV is a mosquito-borne disease which can infect humans, horses and birds.

This is the first summer in three years that WNV has been detected in the county.

“We will be focusing our treatment efforts immediately on the affected area of East Knoxville,” Said Ronnie Nease, KCHD director of Environmental Health. “Mosquito control technicians will be in that particular area Sunday night and Monday. Other areas will continue to be treated as scheduled.”

To address the public health concerns caused by mosquitoes, Knox County Health Department (KCHD) conducts a mosquito control program during the summer months. Every year, as the weather begins to warm, KCHD public health professionals begin evaluating communities for mosquitoes and treating specified areas to reduce the mosquito population. From early in the spring until the first frost, larvicides are used in areas with standing water to prevent mosquito proliferation. As mosquito populations grow, another approved treatment, in the form of a mist, also is used. Application is done in the overnight hours between midnight and 6 a.m., beginning the first week of June until the first frost.

Eliminating breeding areas is an important factor in controlling the mosquito population. KCHD urges the public to reduce breeding sites around their homes by following these tips:

- Dispose of, regularly empty, or turn over any water holding containers on your property such as tires, cans, flowerpots, or trashcans.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly and water doesn't stand in them.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least once a week.

- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Keep swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs clean and properly chlorinated;
- Remove standing water from pool covers.

It also is important for residents to take necessary precautions against West Nile Virus during outside activity, either by proper clothing or insect repellent. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to keep mosquitoes from biting you. During mosquito season (generally April through October), take the following precautions:

- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, if possible, since this is the time of greatest mosquito activity.
- If you are outside when mosquitoes are prevalent, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks.
- Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET (the chemical N-N-diethyl-methyl-p-toluamide); and
- Follow the directions on the label. If you are concerned about using repellent products on children you may wish to consult a health care provider for advice or contact the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) through their toll-free number at 1-800-858-7378 or [npic.orst.edu](http://npic.orst.edu).

Surveillance of mosquitoes and birds has revealed no WNV activity since 2005. To protect you and your family from disease, KCHD recommends vigilance in using insect repellent while outdoors and continued property evaluation for mosquito breeding sites.

More information on the mosquito control program and the treatment schedule are available by calling 215-5200 or online at [http://knoxcounty.org/health/vector\\_mosquito\\_control.php](http://knoxcounty.org/health/vector_mosquito_control.php). KCHD also provides the West Nile Virus Fact Sheet and the Public Health Fact Sheet discussing insect bites and repellents. All informational materials may be reproduced and distributed as needed. A Mosquito Control Technician is available to discuss mosquito control at community groups or neighborhood association meetings. Residents may opt out of the treatment program by calling the Health Department.

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