

**Media Release**

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 **To:** All Media

 **From:** Peoria City/County Health Department
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***For Immediate Release***

**West Nile Virus Positive Mosquito Pool in Peoria County**

**Peoria County** – The Peoria City/County Health Department is reporting the first West Nile virus positive mosquito sample detected in Peoria County for 2018. "The positive mosquito pool is an indication that West Nile virus is circulating in our area and individuals should take appropriate preventive measures to protect their health,” states Carey Panier, Interim Director of Environmental Health for the Peoria City/County Health Department.

"West Nile virus (WNV) is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird,” states Panier. “The Health Department has been setting mosquito traps throughout Peoria County to watch for areas of breeding and then testing those mosquitoes for WNV. We are also accepting and collecting dead birds with an emphasis on crows and blue jays to test for evidence of the WNV infection in the area. We want the public to be aware that dead birds can also be infected with WNV, so do not handle dead birds with your bare hands. Double wrap dead birds in plastic garbage bags prior to collection or disposal. If a dead bird is found between now and October 15 and appears to have died of natural causes, you should report it to the Peoria City/County Health Department at 309-679-6161."

Panier further explains, “The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report."

* **REDUCE** exposure - Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night. Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.
* **REPEL** mosquitoes -When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
* **REPORT** mosquito breeding grounds - In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

(more)

Common West Nile virus symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

For more information on public health issues, visit the Peoria City/County Health Department's website at [www.pcchd.org](http://www.pcchd.org).

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The Peoria City/County Health Department continues efforts to

improve community health in Peoria County with the overarching goal

**“to increase the number of people who are healthy at every stage of life.”**