



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Health Department Reports County's First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2018

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) announced today that the county has its first probable human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2018. Samples are being sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmatory testing.

The resident, a male in his early 70s who lives in the Municipality of Penn Hills, was bitten in mid-July by a WNV-carrying Culex mosquito. He was hospitalized when he began exhibiting symptoms, but has since been discharged and is recovering at home.

West Nile is a virus most commonly spread to people by mosquito bites and cases occur mostly during mosquito season, which starts in the summer and continues through fall. WNV is not transmitted from person-to-person.

Between 70-80% of people that become infected with West Nile Virus do not develop any symptoms, and are not impacted in any way. Approximately 20% who become infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with these symptoms will recover completely, and can recover on their own.

Anyone who believes they, or someone they know, has West Nile virus, should consult their healthcare provider for evaluation and diagnosis.

Health Department officials urge the public to protect themselves from mosquitoes by getting rid of standing water in yards and neighborhoods, making sure that open window and doors have screens, using insect repellent on exposed skin and minimizing time spent outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Property owners should also cut back hedges, shrubs and other greenery where mosquitoes can find shelter.

Mosquitos breed in catch basins, artificial containers, and other sources of stagnant water in urban and suburban backyards. Removing standing water on a resident's property is their best defense against mosquitoes. Complaints regarding properties with stagnant water in tires, unmaintained swimming pools or other water-holding containers can be reported to the Health Department by calling 412-350-4046.

During the mosquito season, April through November, West Nile Virus has been regularly found in Allegheny County since 2002. From 2013-2017 there were six reported cases in Allegheny County (0 in 2013, 1 in 2014, 3 in 2015, 0 in 2016, and 2 in 2017).

For more information on WNV, including frequently asked questions about prevention, symptoms and transmission, visit: <http://bit.ly/2LCDxZX>.

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