



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Orders Protective Measures Against West Nile Virus

New human cases reported in Bridgeport and Hamden today

Governor M. Jodi Rell today directed state environmental protection and public health officials to intensify measures to safeguard the public from mosquito-borne West Nile virus – especially along shoreline communities -- as the number of Connecticut residents infected with the virus this year rose to five, including one fatality.

Governor Rell also authorized the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to purchase additional supplies of larvicide for municipalities to use in the control of mosquito populations, especially in areas where disease-bearing mosquitoes have been identified in high numbers. Larvicide is contained in pellets and other non-spray forms to kill larva in mosquito breeding areas.

The Governor directed DEP and the Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide stepped-up technical assistance to local officials in high-incident areas. This includes the greater New Haven area, where a fatality occurred last week and a new human case was reported Monday by DPH.

“Last week, we were very saddened to learn that a New Haven resident passed away from West Nile virus infection,” Governor Rell said. “There are four additional Connecticut residents who have contracted the virus. While I am advised that the other individuals have either recovered or are expected to recover, this is five cases too many.

“August and September represent the peak time for transmission of West Nile virus to people, we are urging everyone to take all precautions to avoid mosquito bites,” the Governor said.

Today (Aug. 29), the Department of Public Health reported that a resident of Bridgeport and a resident of Hamden have tested positive for West Nile virus infection. On Monday, a second New Haven resident was reported with the infection. All three are

expected to recover, state public health officials said. A Bristol resident tested positive earlier this summer and recovered.

“I have asked DEP and DPH to increase their technical assistance contacts with officials in cities and towns where prevalence of West Nile virus activity is high – including New Haven, West Haven and East Haven,” Governor Rell said. “Larvicide will be offered to municipalities in the most affected areas.”

To date, West Nile-positive mosquitoes have been identified in 17 cities and towns in a widening area of Connecticut, DPH reported. The towns include Bridgeport, Danbury, Darien, East Haven, Glastonbury, Greenwich, Hartford, Killingworth, Milford, New Haven, Newington, Norwalk, Southington, Stamford, Stratford, West Haven and Wethersfield.

In a letter to chief municipal officials in the 17 municipalities, Governor Rell gave an overview of state protective measures and technical assistance. “Recent events have raised our level of concern regarding mosquito-borne diseases here in Connecticut, particularly West Nile virus,” the Governor wrote. “Over the past few weeks we have had several human cases of WNV reported, including one fatality. In addition, monitoring data indicate a high number of mosquitoes that have tested positive for WNV, especially in your area...I have asked the Departments of Environmental Protection and Public Health to assess and step up the resources they have available to provide to towns and cities like yours, where high levels of mosquito-related disease activity has been identified.”

“We have collected over 160 West Nile positive pools of mosquitoes at trap sites located in the three most populous counties of the state,” said Theodore G. Andreadis, Ph.D., chief medical entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. “In addition to the expanding number of locations, we continue to identify infected mosquitoes in these areas when trapping is repeated and to isolate the virus from an increasing number of different species indicating continued local buildup.”

Most people who are infected with West Nile virus and become ill will have a mild illness that may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, or a skin rash. Infrequently, people develop severe illness of the nervous system that can also include neck stiffness, disorientation, loss of consciousness, tremors, muscle weakness, and paralysis. Persons older than 50 years of age are more likely than younger persons to suffer the more severe health consequences if they become infected with West Nile virus. During 2005, six Connecticut residents were diagnosed with West Nile infections, one of whom died.

The state West Nile virus monitoring system emphasizes evaluation of mosquito populations. Announcements are made based on the numbers and types of mosquitoes that test positive for West Nile virus. The Agriculture Experiment Station has established a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state from



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June through October. Mosquito traps are set every ten days at each site on a rotating basis.

The Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is an interagency program consisting of the Department of 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.

Precautions to avoid mosquito bites include:

- Minimize time outdoors at dusk and dawn.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing material should be tightly woven.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors.
- Consider using mosquito repellent when it is necessary to be outdoors and always use them according to label instructions. The most effective repellents contain DEET or Picaridin. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is also effective for brief periods of exposure.
- When using DEET, use the lowest concentration effective for the time spent outdoors (for example, 6% lasts approximately 2 hours and 20% for 4 hours) and wash treated skin when returning indoors. Do not apply under clothing, to wounds or irritated skin, the hands of children, or to infants less than 2 months.

Measures to reduce mosquitoes around the home include:

- Dispose of water-holding containers, such as ceramic pots, used tires, tire swings
- Drill holes in the bottom of containers such as those used for recycling
- Clean clogged roof gutters
- Turn over objects that may trap water when not in use such as wading pools and wheelbarrows
- Change water in bird baths on a weekly basis
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, and when not in use, pool covers
- Use landscaping to eliminate areas where water can collect on your property.

Additional resources for information on West Nile virus and mosquito management:

- The Department of Public Health website at <http://dph.state.ct.us>
- The Department of Environmental Protection website at <http://dep.state.ct.us> or 24-hour (toll-free in Connecticut) recorded mosquito information line (866) WNV-LINE (1-866-968-5463) or (860) 424-4184.
- The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Web site at <http://www.caes.state.ct.us>
- The Department of Agriculture Web site at <http://www.state.ct.us/doag>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov>