



NEWS RELEASE

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Niagara County Department of Health Deputy Director, Victoria Pearson today reiterated that a pool of mosquitoes in Erie County has tested positive for West Nile Virus, and she reminds all residents in Niagara County to take extra measures to protect themselves from this potentially serious illness.

While Niagara County has no confirmed positive WNV mosquitoes, positive detection in Erie County confirms that the virus is present in this area of the state. "In recent years, we've seen a statewide decline in the number of positive laboratory confirmed human cases of West Nile virus. However, we must continue to remain vigilant in our efforts to take precautions," Victoria Pearson said. "These findings should remind all Niagara County residents that we must renew our efforts to reduce the potential for serious illness by protecting ourselves from mosquito bites and reducing areas of standing water."

In New York State, the health risk from West Nile virus increases as the summer progresses, and the disease spills over from its reservoir of bird-feeding mosquitoes into species that bite people. In the Northeast region of the nation, most human cases occur during August and September.

The best way to avoid West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Keep mosquitoes out of the house by making sure that screens are in good repair. High-risk individuals, particularly the elderly, should limit the amount of time they spend outdoors between dusk and dawn, or other times when mosquitoes are feeding. For protection against bites, wear long sleeves and long pants outdoors, especially during evening and early morning hours when mosquitoes are most active. Also, consider using an insect repellent to cover exposed skin. Always follow label instructions, and be especially careful when applying repellents to children.

Ms. Pearson concluded that, "The County continues to operate a mosquito surveillance and larvicide application program to reduce the total number of mosquitoes. These efforts will continue until the first frost of the season occurs."

For further West Nile Virus information visit the NYSDOH website at www.nyhealth.gov and the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov or call the Department at 439-7444 and speak to Mr. Fabian Rosati.