

NEWS RELEASE

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Flooding Often Means More Mosquitoes

Floodwater mosquitoes typically do not carry disease

SPRINGFIELD – The months of rain and flooding have created conditions ripe for floodwater mosquitoes (*Aedes vexans*). Fortunately, floodwater mosquitoes, often called nuisance mosquitoes, are not known to carry disease.

“It is important to protect yourself from insect bites, even if they are not known to cause disease,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “While the mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus prefer hot, dry conditions, even the mosquitoes that flourish in cooler, wet weather bring the potential for infection if you scratch a bite and create a wound. Taking some simple precautions can help keep you healthy.”

Many counties in Illinois are currently experiencing flooding conditions. Water that stands in flooded areas for more than 10 days has the potential to produce large numbers of floodwater mosquitoes. Floodwater mosquitoes can travel up to 10 miles from where they breed.

If we start to see drier weather with higher temperatures as we head into summer, we will start to see more mosquitoes, often referred to as house mosquitoes (*Culex pipiens*), that can carry West Nile virus. Nine counties have already reported mosquitoes or birds that have tested positive for West Nile virus. House mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, like street catch basins, ditches, empty flower pots, tires, and any container that holds water that is not changed weekly. In stagnant water, house mosquitoes can multiply rapidly.

To help *Fight the Bite*:

- Avoid being outdoors when house mosquitoes are most active, between dusk and dawn
- Wear socks, shoes, pants, and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR 3535 according to label instructions.
- Ensure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens and keep doors and windows closed at night

More information about West Nile virus can be found at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus>.

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