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**Don't be bugged by West Nile virus**  
*Delaware County Council and Intercommunity Health  
announce mosquito surveillance and prevention programs*

The start of summer also means the arrival of pesky mosquitos and the potential for West Nile virus. Delaware County Council and the county Department of Intercommunity Health remind residents of the simple precautions they can take to reduce the risk of West Nile virus infection.

“It’s important for people to take steps to reduce their risk of becoming infected with West Nile virus,” said Councilwoman Colleen Morrone, Council’s liaison to the Department of Intercommunity Health. “The best intervention is prevention. If you are going to be outside, remember to use insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions -- especially during dawn and dusk – and wear long sleeves and light-colored clothing.”

Delaware County received its first positive mosquito test from a surveillance trap in Chadds Ford on June 12, according to Intercommunity Health Director Maureen Hennessey, who oversees the mosquito surveillance program in Delaware County.

This year, there is heightened awareness of mosquito-borne viruses as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns of a new mosquito-borne virus, chikungunya, which is found in the Caribbean, but has been identified in North Carolina.

West Nile virus first appeared in Pennsylvania in 2000. While most people infected do not get sick, a small percentage of those infected will experience a fever, rash, headache, meningitis, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or even death, according to the CDC.

Intercommunity Health is coordinating the mosquito surveillance and control portion of the multi-agency effort in conjunction with DEP and the Delaware County Penn State Cooperative Extension.

“Staff is working to keep the mosquitoes under control, but you can take some simple steps in your back yard to help,” said Hennessey. “Remember: dump it if it has water in it; drain it if it can be drained; and treat it if it has standing water.”

*(more)*

*(West Nile continued)*

Last year in Delaware County, of the 823 mosquito pools tested 121 mosquito pools were found to be positive for the virus. There were two human cases of West Nile virus in Delaware County last year.

If sufficient numbers of the virus-carrying mosquitoes are detected, they will be controlled using a powdered form of naturally occurring bacteria or a mosquito growth hormone, both of which are harmless to humans and other aquatic life.

West Nile virus prevention information is available on the county website at [www.co.delaware.pa.us](http://www.co.delaware.pa.us) and fliers are distributed through the senior centers, municipalities and the county library system.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has an informative website at [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us). Residents can visit the state website and sign up to receive email information regarding West Nile viral activity and spraying.

Councilwoman Morrone said residents can take a few simple steps in their own back yards to reduce their risk of contracting the West Nile virus. Mosquitoes will develop in any puddle that lasts for more than four days. Tips to eliminate standing water:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Pay special attention to discarded tires that may have accumulated on your property;
- Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outdoors.
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis.
- Turn over plastic wading pools, wheelbarrows and birdbaths when not in use.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used.

Because dead birds can be an indicator of increased risk for West Nile virus infections, people are asked to report dead birds by going to the Pennsylvania West Nile website at [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us).

For information about West Nile virus symptoms in humans, contact the Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH, or visit the West Nile Web site at [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us).