

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FALL IS IN THE AIR AND SO ARE MOSQUITOES

Residents Urged to Remain Vigilant Against West Nile Virus

Fall may be here but West Nile Virus (WNV) remains a threat and Northern Virginia residents are urged to stay vigilant against mosquitoes by wearing insect repellent and removing sources of standing water on their property. Recent rains due to seasonal weather systems make this effort especially important.

Virginia has seen an increase in West Nile activity this season with 12 cases already compared to only seven last year. Eight of the 12 cases occurred in the Northern Virginia Region. Since mosquitoes could remain active and biting until at least the first hard frost, it is important that people continue to take preventive measures, including:

- **Eliminate sources of standing water.** Clean out roof gutters, downspouts and birdbaths. Properly dispose of tires. Turn over or remove containers such as potted plant trays, garbage cans, buckets and toys.
- **Install or repair screens** on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- **Stay indoors** during peak mosquito biting times such as dawn and dusk.
- When possible, **wear long, loose, light-colored clothing.**
- **Apply an insect repellent** that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 on clothing and exposed skin.

Most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will not get sick or will experience symptoms such as headache, fever, body aches or a rash. But people over age 50 and those with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk for severe illness and even death from WNV.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the Virginia Department of Health website at www.vdh.virginia.gov.

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