

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 06-05-20

www.mmdhd.org

Take precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- Michiganders have been cooped up indoors since mid-March, so now that the warmer weather is here, we're all more than ready to head outside for a little fun in the sun. In addition to applying sunscreen to protect our skin from harmful rays, it's also important to take steps to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes are known carriers of West Nile Virus (WNV), a disease that is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird.

Most people who contract WNV have no symptoms, but some may become ill three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms of West Nile virus can include high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, stiff neck and a severe headache. More serious complications include meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain linings) and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). These diseases usually require hospitalization, can be life threatening, and even fatal.

One of the best ways you can protect yourself and your family is to apply an insect repellent, especially between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active and most likely to bite. with DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol or 2-undercanone (following manufacturer's directions). Don't use repellent on children under two months old. Instead, dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs and cover the crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting.

Additional precautions include:

- Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and socks when heading outside.
- Treat clothing with repellent.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens and repair those with tears or openings.
- Empty water once a week from mosquito breeding sites such as bird baths, buckets, unused wading pools and old tires.

Additional information can be found at www.cdc.gov/westnile. Visit Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases for information about current WNV activity in Michigan, including a summary of where WNV infection has been detected in mosquitoes, animals and people.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.

Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

###