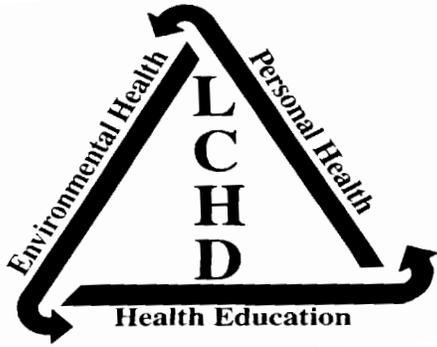


## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 29, 2018  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 226)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 225)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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### **“Health Department Confirms First Case and Death of West Nile Virus”**

**Ottawa, IL** – LaSalle County Health Department has confirmed its first human case and death due to West Nile virus this year. A LaSalle County resident over 65 years who became ill during the first part of August and tested positive for West Nile virus has died. According to Chris Pozzi, Director of Environmental Health, “the report of a death is a very sad reminder that West Nile virus continues to be a serious health issue. This is the time of year we expect to see the potential for human cases increase. West Nile virus thrives in dry, hot weather and our area has definitely experienced those type of conditions this summer. Even as we move into the fall months with fluctuating temperatures, it is crucial to protect yourself against mosquito bites and possible West Nile virus infection. This reminder is especially important as we head into the long Labor Day weekend with many outdoor activities planned, and as fall sporting events get underway. Mosquito activity does slow down as temperatures drop, but until our area experiences a hard freeze personal protection measures need to be taken. The best way to protect yourself against illness is to wear insect repellent and to get rid of any stagnant water around your home to reduce the number of mosquitoes.”

Human West Nile virus cases were previously reported in LaSalle County in 2017 (1), 2016 (1), 2014 (1), 2013 (1), 2007 (2), 2006 (1), 2005 (1), 2004 (5), 2003 (1), 2002 (11) during the late summer and

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early fall months. In addition, earlier this summer mosquitoes and birds also tested positive for the virus in the county.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
LASALLE	07/24/2018	CROW
OTTAWA	07/27/2018	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	07/31/2018	CROW

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex pipiens* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, which has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 60 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Monitoring for West Nile virus includes laboratory tests for mosquito batches, dead crows, blue jays, and robins, as well as testing humans with West Nile virus-like symptoms. People who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, or robin should contact the health department, which will determine if the bird will be picked up for testing.

There are some simple precautions you can take to *Fight the Bite*. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito eggs.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at [www.lasallecounty.org](http://www.lasallecounty.org). A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>.

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