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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND PETS FROM  
WEST NILE VIRUS**

GRAND RAPIDS – Recently, dry weather has helped keep the mosquito population lower than normal for this time of year, but there is still a danger lurking out there - West Nile Virus (WNV). Two counties on the east side of Michigan reported WNV activity last week. The Saginaw County Mosquito Abatement Commission tested a mosquito pool, and found the population was positive for WNV. And in Washtenaw County, a wild turkey displaying signs of WNV, tested positive for the virus at Michigan State University.

“We know the virus is circulating in mosquitoes and birds here in Michigan, so now is the time to act,” said Cathy Raevsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Take a few minutes before you and your family go outdoors to make sure you are protected.”

The Kent County Health Department recommends using insect repellent when outdoors. Apply repellent to clothing and exposed skin, and follow directions on the product label. Don't apply repellent under clothing, or on cuts, wounds or irritated skin. You should not apply repellent around the eyes or mouth, and if using spray, apply spray to your hands first, and then apply to face.

Repellent should not be used on infants under 2 months old at all. KCHD recommends putting netting over the infant's stroller. DEET-containing products should be avoided for children 24 months of age or younger, and those containing *oil of lemon eucalyptus* should not be used on children under three years of age. When using repellent on children, put it on your hands first, then on the child. Children tend to put their hands in or near their mouths, so don't apply repellent to a child's hands.

After you get back indoors, wash off the repellent with soap and water, and wash treated clothing before wearing it again.

For more information, the Michigan West Nile Virus website ([www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus](http://www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus)) includes more about transmission, symptoms and prevention.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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