



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 31, 2012

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**RAIN, CONFIRMED CASE BRINGS NEW WARNING  
ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS**

GRAND RAPIDS – West Michigan saw rainfall this morning, with over ½ inch measured at Gerald Ford International Airport, and more than an inch measured in Sparta. The rain we received is certain to provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes. With milder weather in the forecast, many of us will be spending more time outdoors. Be sure to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes.

State officials say the hot, dry spring and summer allowed mosquitoes carrying the West Nile to hatch early. West Nile can cause a variety of symptoms, from mild aches and a fever to potentially fatal conditions, such as meningitis and encephalitis.

Michigan health officials announced last week that a man from Oakland County was diagnosed as the state's first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) for the year. The Michigan Department of Community Health says the 44-year-old man required hospitalization, but is now at home recovering.

Two counties on the east side of Michigan reported WNV activity in earlier this month. The Saginaw County Mosquito Abatement Commission tested a mosquito pool, and found the population was positive for WNV. In Washtenaw County, a wild turkey displaying signs of WNV, tested positive for the virus at Michigan State University.

“Take a few minutes before you and your family go outdoors to make sure you are protected,” said Cathy Raeovsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “While most people bit by mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus never show any symptoms, the disease can have severe complications in people over the age of fifty or who are already suffering from other medical conditions.”

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 to be used on children

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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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.

WNV caused 34 serious illnesses and two fatalities in Michigan last year, and was to blame for 34 deaths nationwide. 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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