



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WEST NILE VIRUS DIAGNOSED  
IN KENT COUNTY ADULTS**

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department has confirmed one case of West Nile Virus (WNV), and determined two other highly-probable cases. The confirmed case involved a 68 year old male. The probable cases, a 67 year old male and a 59 year old female, are waiting for follow-up tests to be completed for a final diagnosis. All three required hospitalization, but are now recovering.

“We are very concerned about West Nile Virus after a mild winter and hot summer,” said Cathy Raevsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “The disease can have severe complications in people over the age of fifty or in those who are already suffering from other medical conditions.”

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 43 states have reported WNV infections in 2012 so far. 693 cases of West Nile Virus disease have been confirmed in people through the second week in August, 2012 - the highest number of WNV disease cases reported to CDC (over the same period) since the virus was first detected in the United States in 1999. Nationwide, 26 deaths have been attributed to WNV this year.

The Kent County Health Department recommends the following:

- Use 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 and your children get back indoors, wash off the repellent with soap and water, and wash treated clothing before wearing again.

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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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



- At home, be sure you are not making it easy for mosquitoes to breed. Make sure to eliminate any standing water. Twice a week, empty water from birdbaths, flower pots, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels, and cans. Make sure rain gutters are clear of debris. Throw out old tires and other items that could collect water.
- Avoid areas where mosquitoes are likely to be, such as wooded areas or swampy land.

West Nile Virus can produce a range of symptoms in humans. According to the CDC, most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms, though up to 20% may develop mild illness with symptoms including: fever, headache, body aches, rash and swollen lymph glands. Approximately one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness which may be characterized by severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and rarely, death. Persons 55 and over have the highest risk of severe disease.

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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