



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FIVE CONFIRMED CASES WEST NILE VIRUS  
IN KENT COUNTY ADULTS**

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department has confirmed four more cases of West Nile Virus (WNV), in addition to the one confirmed case reported last week, bringing the total confirmed cases to five. Currently, about a dozen other individuals showing WNV symptoms in Kent County are awaiting preliminary test results.

According to the CDC, 80% of people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. Nearly 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.

“We recommend everyone around Kent County take the proper precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones from mosquitoes,” said Cathy Raevsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “West Nile Virus can have severe complications in people over 55 years of age, or those who are already suffering from chronic medical conditions.”

The Kent County Health Department continues to monitor suspected cases, and reiterates the following recommendations:

- 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.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 41 people have died and 1,118 cases of West Nile Virus disease have been confirmed nationwide through August 21, 2012. It is the highest number of cases reported since the disease was first detected in the U.S. in 1999. The state of Texas has been hit the hardest, with 586 confirmed cases and 21 deaths.

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