

---

HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 9, 2013

**For additional information contact:**

**Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7182 or [Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov)**

**PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITOES  
THAT TRANSMIT WEST NILE VIRUS**

GRAND RAPIDS – Last summer was the second worst case load of West Nile Virus (WNV) Kent County has experienced, since the illness started appearing in Michigan in 2002. There were more than 40 cases confirmed last year in the county, with the diagnoses starting in mid-August and continuing through the fall.

"We know that the specific mosquitoes that spread West Nile Virus are present in our area. Most cases of West Nile occur during the months of August and September due to a number of environmental and ecological variables," said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. "Citizens should know that there are simple steps they can take to protect their families from mosquitoes." Only one case has been confirmed in Michigan so far this year, in St. Joseph County.

The Kent County Health Department recommends the following:

- Use insect repellent when outdoors. Apply repellent to clothing and exposed skin, and always 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. Products 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.
- 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 such as fever, headache, body aches, rash, and swollen lymph glands. Some people will develop severe illness, with severe headaches, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and rarely, death. Persons 55 and over have the highest risk of severe disease.

###

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).

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503