



DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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First Birds Test Positive For West Nile Virus In Douglas County In 2006 According To Douglas County Health Department Officials

Omaha - Two dead crows found in Douglas County on June 5 and June 14 have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV).

"Confirmation of WNV in birds means that the virus is starting to circulate in Douglas County and residents need to get in the habit of protecting themselves from mosquito bites," said Dr. Adi Pour, Director of the Douglas County Health Department.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on birds that are infected with the virus.

Although the risk of serious illness to most people is low, less than 1 percent of individuals infected with WNV will develop a more serious illness.

Dr. Pour is advising Douglas County residents to take these 4 simple steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and WNV:

- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, according to label instructions, whenever you are outside;
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants if you are going to be out at dawn or dusk, when mosquitoes are most active or minimize your outdoor activities during those times;
- Eliminate all standing water that can support mosquito breeding, such as in buckets, flowerpots, old tires, gutters, children's wading pools, etc. and change the water in your bird baths twice a week;
- Be sure all window and door screens fit tightly and have no holes or tears.

WNV was first detected in Nebraska in 2002. Last year in Douglas County 24 birds tested positive for WNV and 13 residents were diagnosed with WNV. No Douglas County residents died from WNV in 2005.

Douglas County Health Department has an active surveillance program underway to test birds and mosquitoes for WNV and treat standing water with larvicides. In addition, physicians and health care providers are encouraged to test patients who have neurologic symptoms compatible with West Nile virus, according to Pour.

The public is encouraged to report dead birds, especially blue jays and crows, to the Douglas County Health Department at (402) 444-7481.

For more information on WNV go to www.douglascountyhealth.com or www.cdc.gov.

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