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Mosquitoes in Belmont and Burlington Test positive for West Nile Virus.

Lexington has not had any WNV positive mosquito or human cases so far this season.

August 18, 2011- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes collected from the Town of Arlington, Massachusetts. Statewide last year, three thousand five hundred and fifty eight (3,558) mosquito samples were tested for WNV and only one hundred twenty one (121) samples were positive. WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of a mosquito infected with the virus. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of fifty (50) are at higher risk for severe infection.

Culex mosquitoes are the primary vectors of West Nile Virus. The virus is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state, and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. While most mosquito species develop in wetlands, Culex mosquitoes prefer to lay their eggs in catchbasins, clogged rain gutters, unused tires, buckets and other water holding containers. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe infection. People have an important role to play in reducing the risk of WNV and protecting themselves and their loved ones by taking a few, common-sense precautions.

Because of the role of Culex mosquitoes transmitting West Nile Virus, residents can help combat this disease by **mosquito proofing their property**. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to develop by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains, empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently. Install or Repair Screens - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

You may also avoid Mosquito bites by following these simple steps.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider re-scheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.

Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products can also be used but they are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.

Over the next few weeks, the Lexington Health Division will continue to work with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, (MDPH) and the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project (EMMCP) to monitor the mosquito populations for WNV. The town's catchbasins are being treated with larvicides that will control the Culex mosquitoes that develop there. In the spring helicopters were used to apply Bti granules to control mosquito larvae at 183 wetland acres. Bti (Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis) is a microbial insecticide used to control mosquito larvae in wetlands. In addition, the Lexington Health Division has distributed mosquito bite prevention information at the Lexington Farmer's Market, the Cary Library, Police Station and also the Town Administration Building.

Information about WNV and reports of WNV activity in Massachusetts during 2011 can be found on the MDPH website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv>. Recorded information about WNV is also available by calling the MDPH Public Health Information Line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968). Facts sheets on WNV and other mosquito-related materials are available at the Office of Community Development, Health Division, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue. For more information please contact the Office of Community Development, Health Division, Gerard Cody, Health Director at 781-862-0500 x 237 or gcody@lexingtonma.gov.