



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Health Department

505 Broadway Street, Suite 372
Baraboo, WI 53913

Telephone: (608) 355- 3290 Fax: (608)355-4329

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2017

CONTACT:

Cindy Bodendein, Health Officer
(608) 355-3290
Sauk County Health Department

SAUK COUNTY HORSE TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Protect Yourself Against Mosquito Bites

The Sauk County Health Department reports that a horse in Sauk County on has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) on September 1, 2017. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection reported the positive test result to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health.

WNV is transmitted to humans, horses, birds, and other animals during bites from infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes acquire WNV by feeding on infected birds. The virus is not transmitted person to person or directly between animals or between animals and humans. Presence of a WNV positive horse confirms that there are mosquitoes in the area infected with the WNV that can transmit the virus to people and other animals.

Because West Nile virus is known to be currently circulating, Wisconsin residents and visitors to the state should be vigilant in taking measures to prevent mosquito bites. It is important that people contact their healthcare provider if they suspect they have WNV illness.

Horse owners should be reminded to contact their veterinarian to vaccinate their animals. In addition to vaccination, horse owners can protect their horses by removing standing water and keeping animals inside from dusk to dawn.

The best way to avoid mosquito-borne diseases is to reduce exposure to mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. When cold weather arrives, the mosquitoes will be eliminated, but until then people are urged to take measures to protect themselves.

The Sauk County Health Department recommends the following:

- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply an Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent to clothing as well as exposed skin since mosquitoes may bite through clothing.

- Make sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquito entry.
- Properly dispose of items that hold water, such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or discarded tires.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools, boats, and canoes when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim tall grass, weeds, and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Landscape to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.

During 2002, the state documented its first human infections and 52 cases were reported that year. During 2016, 13 cases of West Nile virus were reported among Wisconsin residents.

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health will continue surveillance for West Nile virus until the end of the mosquito season. A dead bird was already reported to Sauk County Health Department on June 2, 2017. Further reporting of dead birds in Sauk County is not necessary. To report a sick or dead crow, blue jay, or raven, please call the Dead Bird Reporting Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

For more information on West Nile virus:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/arboviral/westnilevirus.htm>