

First human West Nile Virus death in Illinois for 2017

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has confirmed the first human West Nile virus-related death in Illinois for 2017. A Kankakee County resident who tested positive for West Nile virus died earlier this month.

“Although we will soon start seeing cooler weather, West Nile virus is still a concern,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “It’s important for everyone to continue taking precautions like using insect repellent, wearing long sleeve shirts and pants, and staying indoors between dusk and dawn.”

IDPH reported the first human case of West Nile virus in Illinois this year on July 20, 2017 and IDPH is currently reporting 37 human cases. Last year there were 155 human cases, including six deaths.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. However, four out of five people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 and immunocompromised individuals are at higher risk for severe illness.

Remember to take some simple precautions to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and protect yourself from being bitten.

- Minimize being outdoors when mosquitoes transmitting West Nile virus are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, such as old tires, buckets and other receptacles, or refresh the water in bird baths, flowerpots and wading pools every couple days.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the [IDPH website](#).