

NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

Contact: Jeff Golden (608) 243-0302

Ticks and Mosquitoes – They're Back!

Time to Pay Attention to Protecting Yourself from these Unhealthy Pests

MADISON WI – May 18, 2015 – With the weather warming up, we can finally start spending more time outside. While enjoying this outdoor time, it's important to remember to protect yourself from the seasonal health risks provided by mosquitoes and ticks. Each of these pests presents us with different potential threats to our health.

MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes get very active at dawn and dusk and we can usually see them and hear them buzzing around our ears. One variety of mosquito found here is capable of carrying West Nile Virus (WNV). Although your chances of getting bitten by an infected mosquito are small, it still is worthwhile to take appropriate precautions to avoid getting bitten.

Most people infected with WNV will not display symptoms. Those who do show symptoms may develop a fever, headache, rash, muscle and joint aches, nausea, vomiting and fatigue that can last a few days. In rare cases, WNV can cause severe disease including encephalitis and meningitis. There is no specific treatment for WNV infection other than to treat symptoms. If you think you have WNV infection, contact your healthcare provider.

To help track the presence of WNV in Dane County report any sick or dead blue jays and crows you see by calling the Dead Bird Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

While we can't predict whether this will be a particularly bad summer for mosquitoes, we can be sure that these annoying and sometimes threatening little bugs will be around. So do your best to avoid getting bitten.

To prevent mosquito bites, wear insect repellent and long sleeves and pants when outside, especially early in the morning and at night. For more detailed information regarding West Nile virus and how to protect yourself against mosquito bites, visit: www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html. For information on insect repellents: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>.

For more information regarding West Nile virus in Wisconsin, visit: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/ArboviralDiseases/WestNileVirus/Index

For information on WNV and PHMDC's mosquito monitoring efforts, see

<http://www.publichealthmdc.com/disease/westNile/index.cfm>

You can also call PHMDC at (608) 266-4821 with questions about WNV.

TICKS

Ticks (usually deer or blacklegged ticks) present a different set of issues and threats. First, they are sneaky, hiding themselves in wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter and slyly attaching themselves to any exposed skin, often without you feeling anything. These ticks can

carry bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause human disease, including Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, and Powassan. Lyme disease is the most common illness that we have seen in Dane County but ticks infected with these other organisms have been found in other counties in Wisconsin.

The risk of catching a tick borne illness is highest from spring through summer when the ticks are most active.

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease may occur 3 days to 30 days after the bite from an infected tick and can include a rash that looks like a bulls-eye, fever and chills, fatigue, headache, muscle and joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes. The disease can be treated with antibiotics when detected early. If left untreated, Lyme disease can result in debilitating arthritis, and serious heart and nervous system complications.

To prevent tick bites and reduce the risk of getting tick borne diseases be sure to use insect repellent and wear long pants and long sleeves. Check yourself, your children and pets for ticks after being in wooded or tall grass areas. See the websites listed below for more detailed information on preventing and managing tick bites.

If you are bitten by a blacklegged tick, call your healthcare provider to discuss whether you should take preventive antibiotics.

For more information on tick borne diseases: www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/

For details on how to help prevent Lyme disease through actions you can take in your yard, see www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/in_the_yard.html

-END-

An online version of this release is available at

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/news/ticks-and-mosquitoes-theyre-back>