

August 24, 2010
For Immediate Release
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City to Spray Insecticide Wednesday To Kill Mosquitoes on West/NW Side

Targeted Effort Fights West Nile Virus

City officials are continuing their **stepped-up efforts against West Nile Virus** by spraying to kill adult mosquitoes in portions of the West and Northwest Sides.

Spraying will occur in the **Austin** and **Belmont Cragin** areas, where Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) traps recently yielded mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus. The area to be sprayed is bounded by Diversey on the north, Chicago Avenue on the south, Narragansett (Diversey to North Avenue) and Austin (North Avenue to Chicago Avenue) on the east and Kostner (Diversey to Fullerton) and Cicero (Fullerton to Chicago Avenue) on the west. (*Editor: map attached.*)

“When our mosquito traps indicate that the West Nile Virus may threaten human health in a community, we take decisive action promptly,” stated Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Bechara Choucair, M.D.

Weather permitting, the spraying will begin at about 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 25 and continue for about four to five hours, with licensed mosquito abatement technicians in trucks dispensing an ultra-low-volume spray.

Spraying will occur starting at dusk, the peak period of activity and exposure of the Northern House Mosquito, the type of insect that spreads the West Nile Virus.

The material being used to control the adult mosquitoes, Evergreen 60-6, will be applied at a rate of 0.87 fluid ounces per acre. It is approved for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is used to control mosquitoes in outdoor residential and recreational areas.

Evergreen 60-6 is a natural pyrethrin product. Pyrethrins are a botanical insecticide group produced primarily from chrysanthemum flower extracts. Pyrethrin has been used effectively to control insects for decades and is non-persistent, decomposing rapidly in the environment. This rapid degradation of pyrethrin makes it an excellent choice for control of WNV-carrying mosquitoes.

The spray will be applied by technicians from **Vector Disease Control Inc.**, a leader in the mosquito control industry. Guiding the crews through the streets will be supervisors from the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation.

While the spray is not harmful to people or pets and is routinely sprayed in residential areas across the nation, residents of targeted neighborhoods may choose to stay indoors and close their windows while spraying is underway, as an extra precaution.

“Spraying to kill adult mosquitoes is a sensible and effective component of an integrated pest management program. We spray when we have clear evidence that the West Nile Virus has made significant inroads into a community,” added CDPH Environmental Health Director Cort Lohff, M.D. “And while no one can control the weather—and in a city of 228 square miles we can't prevent every

single mosquito from hatching and biting, **it is our expectation that this effort, by further limiting the mosquito population, will prevent cases of human illness in Chicago.**"

The Northern House mosquito, *Culex pipiens*, is the primary carrier of West Nile virus. This mosquito species thrives in water with high organic content, such as that found in catch basins (storm sewers). Consequently, a hot, dry summer increases the risk of West Nile virus infection, exactly the opposite of what many people believe.

In contrast, the swarms of mosquitoes most people currently are experiencing are *Aedes vexans*, which is a common "floodwater" mosquito that appears after heavy rains. This mosquito may be a nuisance, but they rarely are infected with West Nile Virus. Therefore, although the number of mosquitoes has significantly increased in recent weeks, the risk of WNV transmission outside the current spray zone has not.

In 2009, some 720 human cases (32 of them fatal) of West Nile-related illness were reported nationally. In Illinois, there were five reported cases (one of them in Chicago) and no deaths.

Thus far in 2010, some 115 cases (three fatal) have been reported nationally. In Illinois, no human cases have been reported yet; but the virus has been detected (in mosquitoes and/or birds) in 25 counties, including city and suburban Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane, Kendall and Will.

In the city, the virus has thus far been detected in a significant, sustained presence in CDPH mosquito traps in Austin, Belmont Cragin, Forest Glen and at O'Hare International Airport. (Forest Glen and the O'Hare area have been sprayed.) The virus has been detected only sporadically in CDPH traps in the Dunning, Portage Park and Norwood Park areas of the Northwest Side; and in the Chicago Lawn, Clearing, New City and West Pullman neighborhoods on the South and Southwest Sides.

CDPH officials say it is possible that human cases of West Nile-related illness may start appearing in the weeks ahead, both in the city and elsewhere.

Therefore, CDPH officials ask all Chicagoans to take precautions to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites. Especially important is the use of insect repellent containing [DEET](#), [Picaridin](#), or [Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus](#).

Northern House mosquitoes are not aggressive, and people rarely notice when being bitten.

In addition to using insect repellent to avoid bites, CDPH officials advise:

- Consider limiting outdoor activity after dark (dusk to dawn), which is when Northern House Mosquito is most active.
- When outside between dusk and dawn, wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing that includes long pants, long-sleeved shirts, socks and shoes.
- Check to see that all screen on doors and windows are tight-fitting and free of holes and tears.
- Encourage neighbors to exercise precautions.

To limit mosquito breeding opportunities, CDPH officials recommend:

- draining and replacing water in birdbaths and children's backyard wading pools every four to five days;
- properly disposing of old tires, jars, cans, pans, bottles, buckets and other unwanted containers that can hold standing water;
- making sure that rain gutters, downspouts, swimming pools and pool covers are free of standing water;

- keeping grass and weeds cut short to eliminate hiding places for adult mosquitoes;

Human infections occur when people are bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus. On average, **only about 2 in 10 people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will actually become ill.**

For those who do become ill, West Nile Virus infection can cause a relatively mild illness called West Nile Fever, characterized by fever, muscle aches, rash and headache. More severe West Nile illness is less common, but can include meningitis (inflammation of the membrane surrounding the brain) and encephalitis (inflammation and swelling of the brain itself). **People of all ages are susceptible to West Nile infection, but people over age 50 are at greater risk of developing severe illness.**

For prevention tips and updates on West Nile Virus activity in Chicago, visit www.cityofchicago.org/health.

For an expert national perspective on West Nile Virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the Internet at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm.

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West Nile Disease, Reported Cases in Chicago

2002	225 cases, 22 fatalities
2003	4 cases, 0 fatalities
2004	6 cases, 1 fatality
2005	41 cases, 1 fatality
2006	29 cases, 1 fatality
2007	11 cases, 0 fatalities
2008	4 cases, 0 fatalities
2009	1 case, 0 fatalities
2010	no cases reported to date