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Mosquito Abatement District to Spray Thursday Night

A dramatic increase in the number of area samples testing positive for West Nile Virus has prompted the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District to schedule spraying in the Village after 9 p.m., Thurs., weather permitting. The Oak Park Department of Public Health will notify residents of spraying via its automated emergency telephone system.

The numbers of infected mosquitoes gathered in traps over the past few nights have exploded, officials say, with samples from Oak Park having the highest percentage of virus-bearing mosquitoes of all of the pools tested within the abatement district's 77-square-mile jurisdiction.

Insecticides approved by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be used. They break down in sunlight within 24 hours, produce little residual effect and should not pose any undue risk to humans or animals. However, persons with asthma or other respiratory ailments, or who believe they are chemically sensitive, may wish to stay inside during spraying with their windows closed, and air conditioners off or set to recirculate and the exhaust closed. Residents also may call the abatement district at 708.447.1765 to discuss not spraying directly in front of their homes.

Spraying to kill adult mosquitoes is the control tool of last resort, as efforts focus first on killing mosquito larvae before they become adults. The Mosquito Abatement District has been larviciding since the spring. Oak Park stopped spraying for nuisance mosquitoes more than 20 years ago, except in health emergencies.

The last time spraying occurred in Oak Park was in late summer 2002, when Illinois led the nation in human cases and deaths from the virus. The virus has remained a real threat, officials say, as Illinois' first human case this year was confirmed in late July in downstate St. Clair County near St. Louis.

For more information on Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District activities and notices, visit www.desplainesvalleymad.com or call 708.447.1765. Information also is posted on the Department of Public Health pages of the Village website, www.oak-park.us.

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