



For Immediate Release: 06.01.07

From: David Powers
Communications Director
708.358.5781

Contact: Margaret Provost-Fyfe
Acting Public Health Director
708.358.5480

Village offers on-line registration for mosquito spraying notification

Although spraying to control adult mosquitoes that may carry West Nile Virus is a tool of last resort and usually never occurs until late summer, the Oak Park Department of Public Health already is preparing its notification list.

Residents who wish to be notified prior to spraying, should it become necessary, can visit www.oak-park.us and sign-up to be notified by an automated telephone system or e-mail when spraying in Oak Park is scheduled by the [Desplaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District](#). Residents also can sign up by calling the West Nile Virus Hotline at 708.358.5694, being sure to leave their name, address and the telephone number they wish to be added to the notification system.

The Desplaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District, which covers Oak Park and its surrounding suburbs, monitors mosquito pools for signs of the virus, then determines when targeted spraying is appropriate. Spraying is only used when other methods of controlling disease-carrying mosquitoes are not sufficient and there is a risk to human health, officials say.

Oak Park was sprayed last year after samples from the Village had the highest percentage of virus-bearing mosquitoes of all of the pools tested within the abatement district's 77-square-mile jurisdiction. At least one case of the virus was confirmed in Oak Park.

The abatement district sprays with products approved by [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) that break down in sunlight within 24 hours, produce little residual effect and pose no undue risk to humans or animals. However, persons with asthma or other respiratory ailments, or who believe they are chemically sensitive, may wish to add their names to the notification list so they can choose 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.

-more-

Mosquito spraying notification 2-2-2

Meanwhile, with samples of mosquitoes in Illinois already testing positive for West Nile Virus, the Village has launched its community education and prevention program. The focus this year will continue to be on helping residents reduce the mosquito population and the chances of being bitten, steps experts say are the best ways to control the disease.

Information is being disseminated to the community through a variety of media, including the Village's cable television station [VOP-TV6](#) and website. Staff also will participate in public forums and distribute a variety of educational materials such as brochures and posters. Anyone interested in a presentation or the materials should call the West Nile Virus Hotline, 708.358.5694.

The Desplaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District also has begun treating all street catch basins to kill mosquito larvae, an activity that occurs every seven to 10 days during the mosquito-breeding season. The abatement district will treat catch basins on private property by request, provide information on acquiring mosquito-larvae-eating gambusia fish for ornamental ponds and pick up old vehicle tires. Call 708.447.1765 or visit www.desplainesvalleymad.com for more information.

Only about two persons out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness, officials say. Illness from West Nile disease usually is mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, are possible and can lead to death. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease and prolonged recovery periods. Nearly 900 people have died from the disease since it was first identified in the United States in 1999.

To reduce the risk of West Nile illness and other mosquito-borne diseases, public health officials recommend taking these precautions:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. The absence of swarms of nuisance mosquitoes doesn't mean the virus-carrying mosquitoes aren't present
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

-more-

Mosquito spraying notification

3-3-3

- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in birdbaths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.

For more information on West Nile Virus, contact the Oak Park Department of Public Health at 708.358.5694, e-mail health@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us. Information also is posted on several websites, including the Illinois Department of Public Health www.idph.state.il.us and Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov.

###