

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2013

Protect Yourself Against West Nile Virus During Evening Activities

Macomb – The McDonough County Health Department (MCHD) would like to remind residents to protect themselves against West Nile virus when enjoying the outdoors during times when mosquitoes are most active. If you are out at sporting events, camping, or otherwise enjoying the great outdoors at dusk, protect yourself by wearing 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.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common West Nile virus 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 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

A bird collected on September 17, 2013 was the first West Nile virus positive bird tested from the county. To date, West Nile virus positive birds, mosquitoes and/or human cases have been reported in fifty-seven counties; two of the ten human cases have resulted in death.

For more information, or to report a dead or sick-looking bird, please contact Stefanie Johnson at the McDonough County Health Department Monday through Thursday from 7:30am to 5:00pm at 309-837-9951 ext. 220.