



Columbia County Department of Health

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For Immediate release:

Even though no reported cases of West Nile virus have occurred in Columbia County, The Columbia County Department of Health wants you to have the information you need to protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus this summer as the weather has been rather wet. Many mosquitoes that can transmit West Nile Virus lay their eggs in stagnant water around the home. "Any standing water around the yard can provide a home for mosquitoes to breed. Mosquitoes can then enter houses through broken screens or unscreened windows or doors," said, Ed Coons, Public Health Sanitarian. Because West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, protecting yourself against mosquito bites is the best way to avoid the transmission of the disease.

Mosquitoes can breed in any stagnant water that lasts more than four days. To reduce the mosquito population around your home and property, the local health department advises you to take the following steps to reduce or eliminate standing water:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Drill drain holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure that your roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in bird baths twice a week.
- Dispose of used tires. Call your local landfill or public works department to find out how to dispose of them properly.
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds.
- Clean and properly chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property.
- Make sure windows and doors have screens in good condition.

It is not necessary to limit any outdoor activities, you can reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, "Most mosquitoes do not transmit disease", Mr. Coons said.

To avoid mosquito bites:

- Minimize outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when you are outdoors for long periods of time or when mosquitoes are most active.
- Consider using mosquito repellent when outdoors. Follow label directions carefully.

For more information or to report dead birds particularly crows call the Columbia County Health Department at (518) 828-3358 during regular business hours Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the New York State Department of Health's web site at www.health.state.ny.us.