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## **Dual Infection of West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis Detected in Kalamazoo County**

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Health officials are again advising residents to take precautions against mosquitoes after a case of dual infection of West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) was detected in a horse in Kalamazoo County.

To date, no human cases of either virus have been reported in Kalamazoo County, however, Calhoun County reported a human case of West Nile Virus Sept. 13. The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services department previously reported a case of West Nile Virus in a deceased trumpeter swan on September 9, 2024.

“Another detection of these mosquito-borne illnesses in our county should serve as a reminder to how serious this issue is,” said Lucas Pols, Environmental Health Division Manager for the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department. “EEE and West Nile Virus can cause serious illness and even death, and we want to stress the importance of mosquito bite prevention this season.”

Transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes, West Nile Virus is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While most infected with West Nile Virus may not show any symptoms, about one in five people develop mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and fatigue. In rare cases, West Nile Virus can lead to severe neurological complications and death, especially among older adults and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Also spread by the bite of mosquitos, only a few human cases of EEE are reported in the United States each year. Most cases occur in eastern or Gulf Coast states. Although rare, EEE is very serious. Approximately 30% of people who develop severe eastern equine encephalitis die, and many survivors have ongoing neurologic problems. Symptoms of eastern equine encephalitis can include fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, behavioral changes, and drowsiness.

The presence of these viruses in our community reinforces the importance of prevention measures, including the following:

- **Use Insect Repellents:** Apply Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, and 2-undecanone. Read labels before applying.
- **Wear Protective Clothing:** Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks treated with 0.5% permethrin to minimize skin exposure to mosquitoes.

- **Avoid Peak Mosquito Activity:** Mosquitoes are most active from around dusk to dawn, so try to limit outdoor activities during these times.
- **Eliminate Standing Water:** Drain and rid areas that hold water, such as plant pots, tires, clogged gutters, and bird baths. Standing water can serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- **Equip Screen Windows and Doors:** Ensure windows and doors are equipped with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering indoor spaces.

The Environmental Health Division will continue mosquito surveillance and testing throughout Kalamazoo County until at least the end of September or when temperatures drop significantly. For more information about mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/mosquito-borne/default.html>.

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