

## NEWS RELEASE

### Office of Communications

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**June 5, 2012**

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## **Fulton County Health Services Prepares for West Nile Virus Season**

*Prevention is best protection*

Fulton County Health Services urges residents to use preventive measures to deter mosquito growth in their neighborhoods. West Nile Virus (WNV) can cause a serious illness and is transmitted from mosquitoes to humans. The occurrence of this virus increases in the summer and continues into the fall. “We are entering the season for increased mosquito activity,” says Patrice A. Harris, MD, Director of Fulton County Health Services. “In 2011, two human cases of West Nile Virus were identified in Fulton. It is important for us to continue our prevention program and for everyone to use preventive measures to protect themselves and their families against the virus.”

The Fulton County Department of Health Services will be trapping and testing mosquitoes in 30 locations throughout the county. Also, catch basins are treated around identified “hot spots” associated with areas where WNV activity is known to occur and around locations such as senior centers, schools and hospitals where highly susceptible individuals gather.

Symptoms of WNV include headache, fever, neck discomfort, muscle and joint aches, swollen lymph nodes and a rash. WNV can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and lining of the brain). People with weak immune systems or other underlying conditions are at greater risk of experiencing complications from the disease.

Dr. Harris adds, "West Nile Virus is a serious illness but is preventable if we take action to reduce our exposure to mosquito bites."

Mosquitoes need water to breed. Eliminate mosquito breeding grounds by removing areas of standing water:

- Dispose of old tires. Regularly empty any metal cans, ceramic flowerpots, bottles, jars, buckets, and other water-holding containers on your property.
- Turn over plastic wading pools, outdoor toys and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets.
- Keep gutters cleaned and sloped to the downspout.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated. Remove standing water from pool covers.
- Make sure windows and screens are in good condition.
- Purchase and use a larvicide to eliminate mosquito larvae in areas with standing water and in containers that cannot be dumped.

Mosquitoes that carry the WNV bite during the evening, night and early morning. Take precautions to protect yourself and your family during these periods.

- Use insect repellent containing the active ingredient N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET). Spray the top of your clothing and exposed skin. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and socks when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk.

For more information on WNV and prevention methods, call the ***Mosquito Hotline: 404-730-5296*** or contact the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness, Division of Environmental Health at (404) 613-1301. More information is also located on-line at <http://www.fultoncountygahealth.org>.

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July 31, 2012



## **Fulton County Health Services Urges Prevention During West Nile Virus Season**

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**August 6, 2012**



## **Six West Nile Virus Mosquito Sample Locations Identified in Fulton County**

*Residents reminded to take precautions*

The Georgia Division of Public Health has notified the Fulton County Department of Health Services that mosquito samples in six communities have tested positive for the West Nile Virus. A mosquito “sample”, refers to a collection of mosquitoes from a particular area that is tested for the virus.

“August begins the peak season for West Nile Virus,” said Patrice A. Harris, Director of Fulton County Health Services. “The identification of these samples is a reminder to all of us to take precautions when outdoors.”

The locations of the sites for each positive mosquito sample are as follows:

- Tanyard Creek CSO, Atlanta– one (1) positive mosquito sample
- Frankie Allen Park, 425 Pharr Rd., N. E., Atlanta one (1) positive mosquito sample
- Grove Park (709 Hortense Place, Atlanta)-one (1) positive mosquito sample
- Ronald Bridges Park (5285 Lakeside Dr., College Park) one (1) positive mosquito sample
- Burdett Park (2945 Burdett Rd., College Park) one (1) positive mosquito sample
- Wills Park (1925 Wills Rd., Alpharetta) one (1) positive mosquito sample

To reduce exposure to mosquitoes and to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus, Fulton County Health Services recommends the following:

- Limit outdoor activity at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active and dress appropriately when outdoors for long periods.

- Use insect repellent with an EPA-approved active ingredient such as DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the package for the safest and most effective use.
- Remove standing water or treat it with a larvicide to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs.
- Dump containers such as recycling bins, empty flowerpots and other containers that may collect water.
- Change water in birdbaths or small wading pools at least once a week.

WNV usually infects birds, but it can spread to humans by mosquitoes that feed on infected birds and then bite humans. Most people bitten by infected mosquitoes do not get sick. Less than 1 percent of people infected with WNV develop a serious illness such as encephalitis. People who have chronic medical conditions are at greater risk of developing severe illness if infected with WNV. Those who do get sick from WNV often suffer a mild flu-like illness and recover without treatment.

For more information on West Nile Virus and prevention methods, call the ***Mosquito Hotline: 404-730-5296*** or contact the Fulton County Health Services, Division of Environmental Health at (404) 613-1301, or, you can log-on to [www.fultoncountygahealth.org](http://www.fultoncountygahealth.org).

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