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To: DeKalb County News Media

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Public Health Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prevent the spread of West Nile Virus

Help prevent the spread of West Nile Virus
Remove standing water, remember the repellent

DeKalb County Health Department is encouraging residents to be vigilant about eliminating sources for mosquitoes to breed, as well as using personal protection to avoid mosquito bites. Warmer weather means spending more time outdoors. But, it also means that mosquitoes are becoming active. It's never too early for residents to inspect their homes and yards for sources of standing water where mosquitoes are likely to breed.

The Health Department monitors for West Nile Virus (WNV) activity by collecting mosquitoes in traps in the area. Taking precautions to protect yourself and your family reduces the risk of being bitten by any infected mosquito, including those that can transmit WNV and the Zika Virus.

Recommendations to prevent mosquito breeding include:

- Discard old tires, buckets, drums or any water holding containers.
- Keep roof gutters and downspouts clear of debris.
- Keep trash containers covered.
- Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
- Drain unused swimming pools.
- Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water.
- Change the water in bird baths and plant urns at least once a week.

Recommendations to prevent mosquito bites include:

- Wear light-colored clothing that minimizes exposed skin and provides some protection from mosquito bites.
- Make sure door and window screens fit tightly and that all holes are repaired.
- Apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions; consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

While most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness, some may become ill, usually three to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. In some individuals, particularly the elderly, the virus can cause muscle weakness, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, coma or death.

For more information, visit <http://public.dph.illinois.gov/wnvpublic/>.

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