



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

**Health Commissioner
Dr. Gale Burstein**

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BURSTEIN AGAIN URGES INCREASED MOSQUITO AWARENESS

Confirmed West Nile Virus Case in Erie County; Commissioner Reminds Residents to “Fight the Bite”

ERIE COUNTY, NY— Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein today reminded Erie County residents about the dangers of mosquitoes and West Nile Virus (“WNV”), following the confirmation of a human West Nile virus case in Erie County. While that patient has been treated and is recovering, Burstein once again reminded residents that precautions and preventive measures can help to diminish potential exposure to the virus.

“Just like many other communities across the U.S., Erie County has started to see human WNV cases,” **Burstein said.** “WNV is a potentially serious illness. About one in 150 (less than 1%) of people infected with WNV will develop severe illness with symptoms such as high fever, headache, neck stiffness, and stupor. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting. Fortunately, about 4 out of 5 people who are infected with WNV will show no symptoms at all.”

Burstein continued, “WNV is a preventable disease and there are steps that people can take to prevent infection, including minimizing mosquito contact with your skin and decreasing the mosquito burden in your immediate area. Use insect repellent containing at least 25% DEET (10% for children) when you can, and wear a long sleeve shirt and long pants especially during the evening hours. There are also ways to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds in your yard, including dumping out standing water, cleaning clogged gutters, and changing the water in your bird bath.”

The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) recommends several other strategies to “fight the bite”, including maintaining your pool by chlorinating and filtering; maintaining ornamental ponds by stocking them with fish and using bubblers and fountains; removing used tires from your property; eliminating any stagnant water in tin cans, plastic containers, or any container that holds water; and repairing window and door screens.

Burstein added, “People at higher risk from mosquito bites are the immune-compromised, the elderly, and the very young. Residents should use common sense when they are outside and be aware of the environments that produce and protect mosquitoes: stagnant, standing water and weeds, tall grass and shrubbery, which provide an outdoor home for mosquitoes. Dress appropriately, use insect repellent, and eliminate or stay away from mosquito-prone areas where you can. Parents should remember to ensure their children are protected too.”

For more information:

on WNV, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=west-nile-virus>

on ECDOH, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/>

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