



NEWS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN WNY; BURSTEIN URGES PRECAUTIONS

Commissioner Stresses Protection as Two Positive Pools are Found in Amherst

ERIE COUNTY, NY— Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein today reminded Erie County residents about the dangers of mosquitoes and West Nile Virus, following the discovery of two pools of West Nile virus positive (“WNV+”) mosquitoes. The pools, comprised of *Culex pipiens-restuans* specimens, were collected from gravid traps on July 17th and July 18th, and are the first WNV+ mosquito pools collected in Erie County in 2013. To date, no residents have tested positive for West Nile Virus in either Erie County or New York State.

“With this discovery, it’s more important than ever to get the message out about protecting ourselves and our loved ones from mosquito bites,” **said Burstein**. “Adults should use an insect repellent containing 30-50% DEET to keep mosquitoes away, while children over two months of age can use a repellent with 10-30% DEET. We should be most aware of mosquitoes during the evening hours when their activity is heightened, and try to wear a long sleeve shirt and long pants if outside at those times. Also, homeowners can eliminate the mosquito burden on their properties by dumping out any standing water, cleaning clogged gutters, and changing the water in bird baths and planter bases every two days.”

Other strategies recommended by the Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) to combat mosquitoes include maintaining swimming pools by chlorinating and filtering; keeping pool covers drained of any standing water; maintaining ornamental ponds by stocking them with fish and using bubblers and fountains, which prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs; turning over containers, buckets, and wading pools to eliminate standing water; removing used tires from property; and repairing window and door screens as necessary.

Burstein added, “When people are outside, they should use common sense and stay away from the environments mosquitoes thrive in: stagnant, standing water, tall grass, and shrubbery. These places provide protection for mosquitoes and should be avoided. Please remember to protect the immune-compromised, the elderly, and the very young as well, as they are at a higher risk from mosquito bites. Appropriate dress, insect repellent, and staying away from mosquito environments are good ways to avoid getting bitten.”

For more information:

On the Erie County Department of Health, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/>