

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST POSITIVE WEST NILE VIRUS CASE AND DEATH IN WESTCHESTER IN 2020

County Health Department Reminds Residents to Take Precautions Against Mosquitoes

(White Plains, NY) – Westchester County has learned of its first human case of West Nile Virus this year, which was confirmed in a 76-year-old Yonkers resident with significant underlying medical conditions who died on August 22.

Westchester County Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, said: “We are saddened to learn that the first resident to be diagnosed with West Nile Virus this year has died. The overwhelming majority of people who get the virus do recover, and we generally have only a few cases each year. This should remind all of us to take precautions against mosquito bites by removing standing water from our property after it rains, and use repellents when we spend time outdoors, especially from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.”

The Westchester County Department of Health removed standing water from many containers around the resident’s home that held mosquito larvae; evaluated nearby catch basins in the area and treated those with larvicide as needed.

West Nile Virus infection most often causes a mild or moderate flu-like illness, with fever, headache, body aches and joint pain. It can be more serious particularly for people 60 and older, and those with other health complications. Last year, one resident was diagnosed with West Nile Virus. In 2018, four people had the virus, and in 2017, three Westchester County residents had the virus.

Throughout the season, the Westchester County Health Department traps and tests mosquitoes to track the presence of mosquito-borne viruses. For more ideas on how to reduce the mosquito population near your home, go to <https://health.westchestergov.com/west-nile-virus> and follow these tips:

- Avoid the outdoors in the late afternoon and early evening when mosquitoes are active and feeding, or use insect repellents then and follow the label instructions.
- Adults can use insect repellents with up to 30 percent DEET on infants over two months of age by applying the product to their own hands and then rubbing it onto their children, avoiding their hands, eyes and mouth. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under two months of age.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when outdoors, especially in areas where mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Check around your property for anything that can hold water, and pour it out or put it away.
- Check and remove standing water from children's toys and play houses left outside.
- Check window screens and replace any that are torn.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Turn over plastic wading pools, buckets and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris.
- Continue to chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs until properly winterized or drained for the season. Also, if not chlorinated, drain any water that collects on their covers.

Residents who notice large areas of standing water on public property should report them to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com.

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