



## West Nile Virus Carrying Mosquitos Detected in Thurston and Millersport

Fairfield Department of Health's seasonal field technician has been monitoring mosquito populations at various locations throughout the county, thanks to funding received by the Ohio EPA Mosquito Control Grant. Mosquitos are trapped and sent to the Ohio Department of Health for infectious disease lab analysis. Recently, three samples tested positive for West Nile virus were found in Millersport and Thurston.

West Nile virus is spread by infected mosquitos and can lead to sever fever, encephalitis or meningitis. Mosquitos become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitos then spread the virus to humans when they bite. Infected female mosquitos can additionally transmit the virus to their eggs, resulting in infected offspring.

Eighty percent of people who are infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms. Symptoms usually develop between three to 14 days after being bitten. Sever symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, convulsions, vision loss and paralysis. Milder symptoms include fever, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph nodes or a skin rash.

Staff from the Fairfield Department of Health has visited the neighborhoods where the positive mosquito samples were found in order to investigate potential mosquito breeding sites, distribute brochures on how residents can protect themselves, and place larvicide in suspected breeding sites.

We are asking homeowners in all areas of the county to protect themselves from mosquitos! Residents should be aware of peak mosquito hours. Mosquitos are most active and bite during early morning and late evening hours. The mosquito that spreads West Nile virus (culex species) is active in the evening and morning. You can reduce your risk of mosquito bites and contracting West Nile virus by using insect repellent and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus are the most effective.

Residents should eliminate standing water in and around their homes. This includes:

- keeping rain gutters clean of debris
- filling water holding low spots in the yard with dirt
- emptying standing water from anything that holds water; bird baths, children's toys and animal dishes.

