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### Five West Nile Virus cases reported in N.C.

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The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services reported that as of August 29, five cases of West Nile Virus, including two deaths, had been reported in the state.

Confirmed cases have been reported in Cabarrus, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Scotland and Wayne counties.

The Stokes County Health Department urges residents and visitors to take precautions to protect their families from mosquito-borne illness by using insect repellent and eliminating potential breeding sites around homes and businesses.

"While the Division of Public Health has only confirmed cases of West Nile in these five counties, we want to encourage everyone to protect themselves, especially at this time of year, when mosquitoes are most active," State Health Director Laura Gerald said. "West Nile, and other mosquito-borne illness, can occur in any county in North Carolina."

A total of 241 cases of West Nile Virus disease, including four deaths, have been reported to CDC thus far in 2012 in the U.S.

West Nile Virus is transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes. In the United States, most people are infected from June through September, and the number of these infections usually peaks in mid-August. Seasonal outbreaks often occur in local areas that can vary from year to year. Many factors impact when and where outbreaks occur, such as weather, numbers of mosquitoes that spread the virus, and human behavior.

The best way to prevent West Nile virus disease is to avoid mosquito bites:

- Use insect repellents when you go outdoors. CDC recommends repellent containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Remember always to read and follow the manufacturer's directions and precautions on the product label.
- Wear long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk, since mosquitoes are most active at this time.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors.
- Empty standing water from items outside your home such as flowerpots, buckets, gutters, or kiddie pools.
- Clean ornamental ponds and ensure filtration systems are functioning properly.
- Clean and change water in animal troughs at least once a week.

Approximately 1 in 5 people who are infected with West Nile Virus will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than one percent will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues). About 10 percent of people who develop neurologic infection due to West Nile Virus will die. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and organ transplants, are at greater risk for serious illness.

Scott Lenhart, Stokes County Health Director states "that once again, prevention is the key. By following the above recommendation you can reduce the risk of WNV transmission."

There are no medications to treat, or vaccines to prevent, West Nile Virus infection. People with milder illnesses typically recover on their own, although symptoms may last for several weeks. In more severe cases, patients often need to be hospitalized to receive supportive treatment, such as intravenous fluids, pain medication, and nursing care. Anyone who has symptoms that cause concern should contact a health care provider.

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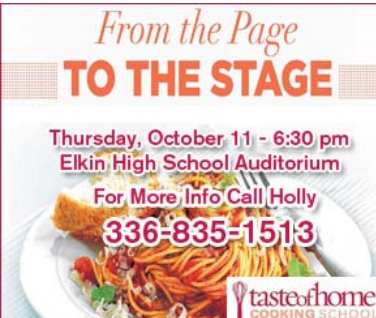
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