



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

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Second bird tests positive for West Nile virus in Multnomah County *Infected robin is found in Vector Control parking lot*

A dead robin found in Multnomah County Health Department's Vector Control parking lot is the second bird testing positive for West Nile virus in the county, public health officials confirmed today. The robin was found in the vicinity of Portland's Kenton neighborhood and was tested by the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Two human cases have been identified in Oregon so far this year. According to Oregon Department of Human Services, in 2006: 73 people were infected with West Nile virus, one person died of complications related to the virus, 25 birds, 35 horses and over 1,000 mosquitoes tested positive for West Nile virus infection. One Multnomah County resident tested positive for West Nile virus in 2006, but contracted the virus in another state.

"This confirms that West Nile virus is established in Multnomah County this year," says Chris Wirth, Manager of Multnomah County's Vector and Nuisance Control. "We have not seen any human cases originating in Multnomah County, but it does mean that people need to take precautions against mosquitoes."

West Nile Virus is primarily an infection of birds. It is spread when a mosquito feeds on an infected bird and then bites a human. Birds cannot transmit the disease to humans, nor can it be transmitted through person-to-person contact, according to Wirth.

"Most people infected with West Nile virus will have no symptoms or a mild, flu-like illness," states Gary Oxman, Multnomah County Public Health Officer. "The infection is more serious for people over the age of 50, and also in people with suppressed immune systems. We encourage people to take action to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites," adds Oxman.

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The best defense against West Nile virus is for individuals to protect themselves from mosquito bites, with these simple steps:

- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding. Make sure gutters drain well, change birdbath water at least weekly, and get rid of old tires or buckets in your yard;
- Avoid playing or working outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active;
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing when you are outdoors;
- Wear insect repellent, preferably one that contains DEET. Follow label directions when using any repellent, especially for children;
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

Oregon officials have been monitoring mosquitoes and birds for the appearance of West Nile virus since 2000. Vector control districts throughout the state routinely collect mosquito specimens and maintain flocks of sentinel chickens, both of which are tested regularly by the Oregon Public Health Laboratory and Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Health officials are testing birds such as crows, jays, and robins that have been dead for less than 24 hours. If people find a dead bird and are concerned about what to do with it, they should call their local health department or vector control agency. In Multnomah County, the public can report dead birds on the Health Department's Vector and Nuisance Control website at <http://www.mchealth.org/wnv/> or by calling 503-988-NILE.

Additional information about West Nile virus can be found on the Web at <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/acd/w Nile/index.cfm> or by calling the statewide toll-free information line at 1-866-703-4636.

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