



# NEWS RELEASE

## St. Charles County Government

Department of Governmental Communications

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### **Three Birds Test Positive for West Nile Virus**

*Hospitals, Large-Animal Veterinarians, and Residents Should Be Alert*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*St. Charles County* – The St. Charles County Division of Public Health has increased surveillance for the West Nile virus (WNV). The announcement was made after confirmation from the State of Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services laboratory that three dead birds collected from the areas of Lake Saint Louis, O’Fallon, and St. Peters tested positive for the virus. Area hospitals and large animal veterinarians are asked to be on alert for symptoms of WNV in humans and animals alike.

The recent findings bring the total of dead birds in St. Charles County that have tested positive for WNV to four. Finding WNV in the avian population is no surprise to health officials. Mosquitoes contract the virus by feeding on birds and, in turn, can pass the disease on to humans. The additional positive findings further demonstrate a need for diligent mosquito control efforts to reduce human risk.

According to Nancy Duncan, Division of Public Health Director, it is important for the public to maintain proper personal protection against the mosquito population. “By following a few simple measures, the public can reduce their risk of receiving mosquito bites and subsequently becoming ill with West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses,” Duncan said.

Using insect repellents containing DEET can reduce the risk of mosquito bites. Look for concentrations of about 25% for adults, and less than 10% for children. Carefully read and follow package directions for application. Reapply if time spent outdoors is longer than the label indicates is effective. The county’s Division of Public Health conducts an aggressive mosquito-control program throughout all unincorporated areas of the county and under contract with several municipalities. The program focuses intensely on larviciding to kill mosquitoes before they reach the adult stage and mosquito trapping to identify species, early evening spraying to kill adult biting mosquitoes, and a continuous educational effort to enlist the help of citizens in eliminating mosquito breeding spots.

For more information on West Nile virus, visit the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and Environment website at [www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org) under the West Nile Virus Information Center link or call the Division of Public Health at 636-949-7404.

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