



## MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 5-31-16

### **Mosquitos aren't just annoying; they can also carry disease**

Stanton- We zap them and trap them. We attempt to repel them with foggers, candles, clip ons, sprays, wipes, and bracelets. We even landscape with certain flowers and plants in an attempt to keep them at bay... ahh, the king of summer pests, the dreaded mosquito!

Nothing can ruin an otherwise enjoyable outdoor activity faster than relentless, pesky mosquitos. But did you know that when a mosquito bites, it can leave behind more than just an irritating, itchy red bump?

Mosquitos are not just annoying, they can also be dangerous. Mosquitos are known carriers of West Nile Virus, a disease which is contracted while feeding on infected birds, and then passed on to humans.

While most people bitten by a WNV infected mosquito show no symptoms of illness, about one in five will experience mild illness with fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Mild cases do improve without medical treatment, but about one in 150 infected people will become severely ill with encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain linings).

At this time, there is no specific treatment for WNV infection, so it's important to take precautions to avoid getting infected. Precautions include:

- Maintaining window and door screens to help keep mosquitos out of buildings.
- Emptying water from mosquito breeding sites such as buckets, unused kiddie pools and old tires.
- Avoiding the outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitos are most active.
- Wearing light colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, especially at dusk and dawn.
- Applying insect repellent to exposed skin or clothing, following manufacturer's directions.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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