



JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

dedicated to the prevention of disease and promotion of wellness for our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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WEST NILE VIRUS SEASON REMINDER

(OLATHE, KS – JUNE 15, 2009) The Johnson County Health Department offers a prevention reminder about the beginning of West Nile Virus season, a disease that generally peaks in August and September.

It is important to keep yourself and your pets safe from the bites of mosquitoes that may have been near or on dead birds, as this is how West Nile Virus is spread. Never approach or touch wild birds, including those that are sick or injured.

If a dead bird is found, never touch it with your bare hands – use disposable gloves, wrap it in newspaper or a plastic bag, put it in a garbage bag, and throw the bird away in your regular trash. Be sure to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water afterwards.

“West Nile Virus can be spread to people by mosquitoes that first bite an infected bird,” states Lougene Marsh, Director of the Johnson County Health Department, “but it is not contagious from person to person. “

You can protect your home and family by taking the following steps:

- Use effective insect repellent with DEET or picaridin on skin.
- Wear protective clothing when practical (long sleeves and pants).
- Remove standing water from flower pots and other receptacles.
- Use larvicide in water that cannot be removed.
- Replace water in bird baths, pet bowls and wading pools at least every three days.
- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

For additional information about West Nile Virus, go to www.kdheks.gov/westnile/ and <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>

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