



WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Williamson County and Cities Health District Confirms One West Nile Virus Related Death

The Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) has confirmed the county's first West Nile Virus related death for 2012. The victim was female, 90-plus years old, and a Williamson County resident. A total of six West Nile Virus (WNV) cases have been reported in Williamson County this year. Two cases were first reported in July. Four additional cases of WNV were reported and confirmed in August. Two of the six reported cases remain under investigation to determine the scope of the illness. Previously, only five cases of WNV have been reported in Williamson County since 2002.

The more serious forms of the West Nile Virus can result in the onset of meningitis and encephalitis, which are infections that have symptoms including headache, high fever, rash, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, convulsions, paralysis, and coma. All age groups are vulnerable to WNV. However, the elderly or people with weakened immune systems face the highest risk of developing a severe or even fatal illness from a WNV infection. WNV symptoms usually begin 3 to 15 days after being bitten. The risk of getting a WNV related disease typically increases in late July and August as more mosquitoes begin to feed on people instead of birds.

The best way to prevent West Nile virus disease is to avoid mosquito bites. Even if mosquito activity seems low; it only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to transmit the virus. WCCHD recommends residents:

- Use insect repellents when you go outdoors.
- Wear long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning, if you have it.
- Empty standing water from items outside your home such as flowerpots, buckets, and kiddie pools.

West Nile Virus Information Resources:

Texas Department of State Health Services West Nile Information:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arboviral/westnile/information/special/>

Annual summaries of West Nile Statistics in Texas:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arboviral/westnile/statistics/annual/default/>