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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wellesley Risk Level Raised to “Moderate” for West Nile Virus

October 6, 2023 (Wellesley, MA) – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has reported the fourth human case of West Nile virus in the Commonwealth this year. This case was reported in Norfolk County on October 5, raising the risk level for human infection of West Nile virus in Wellesley from “low” to “moderate”.

West Nile virus is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While many infected people will have no symptoms or experience mild flu-like symptoms, people over the age of 50 are at a higher risk for severe disease. The substantial amount of rain this summer and continued warm weather have resulted in an increase in the population of the Culex species of mosquitoes, which are known to spread West Nile virus and breed in places where standing water accumulates.

The Health Department is encouraging all residents to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellent when outdoors. (Repellent with an EPA registered ingredient like DEET is recommended; please use according to instructions on the package).
- Avoid outdoor activities during the peak mosquito hours of dusk to dawn.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to keep mosquitoes away from skin.
- Drain standing water around homes, in gutters and downspouts, and in unused flowerpots, wading pools, birdbaths, and other containers where water collects.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from coming indoors.

According to Health Department Director Lenny Izzo, the predicted cooler temperatures will also help control mosquito activity. “Our extended warm weather has resulted in mosquito activity throughout early fall. Residents should take precautions but once temperatures drop, mosquito activity will naturally decrease,” said Izzo.

Additional information and resources about mosquitos and ticks are available on the [Health Department webpages](#).

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