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MEDIA RELEASE

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First Human West Nile Virus in Ross County for 2018

The Ross County Health District reported today the first human West Nile Virus case in the county for 2018. The individual resides in Chillicothe but the Health District has been unable to conduct interviews to narrow down where the exposure may have occurred.

In Ohio, 20 counties have reported West Nile Virus activity in mosquitoes collected and tested as a part of statewide surveillance to date. Thirty-four human West Nile Virus cases were reported by the Ohio Department of Health in 2017, including 5 deaths. The Ohio Department of Health has noted that this year's West Nile Virus activity in mosquitoes is the highest the state has seen this early in the season since 2012, when Ohio reported 122 human West Nile Virus cases for the year.

Primary transmission of West Nile Virus is through the bite of an infected mosquito, and 8 out of 10 who become infected with West Nile Virus experience no symptoms. One in five who do become infected may develop a fever and experience other symptoms including headache, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Symptom development usually occurs between 2 to 14 days after being bitten by the infected mosquito. Lastly, less than one percent of individuals who become infected develop a serious neurological illness, such as encephalitis or meningitis. It is important to note that there are no medications to treat, or vaccines to prevent West Nile Virus infection.

Mosquitoes can live outdoors or indoors, and depending on the species of mosquito, can bite during the day or at dusk/dawn. The best way to prevent West Nile Virus infection is to prevent mosquito bites. Remember the '4 Ds of Mosquito Defense':

Drain: Remove standing water from around your home and yard: Discard old tires, buckets and barrels. Empty plastic wading pools when not in use. Keep roof gutters and downspouts free of debris. Change the water in pet dishes and birdbaths often. Keep trash containers covered.

Defend: Use insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, or 2-undecanone on exposed skin. Always follow label instructions and supervise children in the

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use of repellents. Install or repair door and window screens.

Dusk to Dawn: Mosquitoes are most active during the dusk to dawn hours. Limit outdoor activities during these hours whenever possible. Use an insect repellent with DEET if you have to go out.

Dress: When outdoors, wear long sleeves, long pants, long socks and closed-toe shoes. Treat clothes with permethrin or another EPA-registered insecticide for more protection.

The Ross County Health District is investigating potential breeding sources within the city and is treating standing water with environmentally-friendly larvicides. Concerned individuals may contact Ross County Health District at 740-775-1158 or visit rosscountyhealth.org for more information. See your healthcare provider if you experience any of the previously mentioned symptoms.

For more information about West Nile Virus, visit these helpful websites:

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/wnv>

<https://www.odh.ohio.gov/features/2017/Mosquitoes/fightbites>

<https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>