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Health Department Beginning West Nile Virus Surveillance

West Nile Virus and St. Louis Encephalitis are transmitted through the bite of female culex (house) mosquitoes. They breed in warm, stagnant water and begin to increase in numbers early in the summer. Mild cases of West Nile infections may cause a slight fever or headache. More severe infections are marked by rapid onset of high fever with head and body aches, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, and in most severe cases, paralysis or death. Usually symptoms occur from 3-14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Persons at the highest risk for serious illness are those 50 years of age or older.

The Clark County Health Department will collect dead birds for testing May 1, 2010 through October 15, 2010. Dead birds that are being monitored for disease and that can be submitted for testing includes:

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| • Crows | Robin | Other "perching" species |
| • Blue Jays | House Sparrow | House Finch |
| • Starling | Grackle | Cardinal |
| • Blackbird | Bluebird | |

Birds that are not accepted:

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| • Chickens | Turkey |
| • Gulls | Vultures |
| • Waterfowl | |

Dead birds may be submitted Monday through Thursday between the hours of 8-4 p.m. at the Clark County Health Department. Please notify the health department before double bagging and transporting the dead bird to the health department for testing. If you are unable to transport the bird immediately, the bird should be put on chill packs or refrigerated ASAP, please do not place the bird in the freezer.

Steps to take if you decide to collect a bird:

- Wear rubber or latex gloves when handling the dead bird
- Place bird in a leak proof bag
- Place bagged bird into a second leak proof bag
- Wash hands thoroughly after collection
- Write down the collection location with zip code (include street address, if possible), time and date of collection, type of bird
- Place bird on chill packs or refrigerate immediately
- Notify the health department of when the bird will be brought in

Submitted birds should be dead less than 48 hours and should not be damaged by scavenging animals, killed by gunshot, crushed on a roadway by a motor vehicle and should not be decomposed. Decomposed animals can be recognized as having a strong odor, eyes deflated or dried, maggots present, or bloated from decomposition gases—those specimens should be double bagged and discarded.

The Clark County Health Department would like to remind everyone to take preventive measures to protect themselves and their families from mosquito-borne diseases by using the following guidelines:

- Get rid of old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or any water-holding containers.
- Fill in or drain low places in the yard.
- Keep drains, ditches and culverts free of weeds and trash so water will drain properly.
- Keep roof gutters free of leaves and other debris.
- Cover trash containers to keep out rainwater.
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets.
- Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
- Unused swimming pools should be drained and kept dry during the mosquito season.
- Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water.
- Change the water in birdbaths and plant pots or drip trays at least once each week.
- Store boats covered or upside down, or remove rainwater weekly.
- Repair window screens.
- Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well trimmed around the house so adult mosquitoes will not hide there.
- When outdoors in the evening or when mosquitoes are biting, use personal protection measures (proper use of insect repellent and appropriate clothing). Use a mosquito repellent that contains 10%-25% DEET applied sparingly to exposed skin or clothing. Consult a physician before using repellents on young children.