Town of Sheffield, Massachusetts 01257

September 13, 2013

West Nile confirmed in Mosquitoes

Town of Sheffield contact: Board of Health (413) 229-7000, Ext. 157
County contact: Berkshire Mosquito Control (413) 447-9808

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced that West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes in the area. **The risk level has been changed to moderate.**

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of a mosquito infected with the virus. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at a higher risk for severe infection.

By taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **Be aware of Peak Mosquito Hours** – The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- **Clothing Can Help** reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long sleeve, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Apply Insect Repellent** when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **permethrin, picaridin** (KBR 3023), **IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus** (p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to the skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your house for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens** – Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all your windows and doors.

While the Sheffield Board of Health continues to work closely with the MDPH and other agencies, locally we are working with Berkshire County Mosquito Control (413) 447-9808, who has begun more frequent spraying and monitoring. We are distributing facts sheets on WNV and on reducing exposure to mosquitoes that are available at the Town Hall, Bushnell Sage Library and Senior Center.