



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Henderson County Department of Public Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2018

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La Crosse virus confirmed in Henderson County resident

Hendersonville, N.C. (August 28, 2018) —State health officials have confirmed a case of La Crosse Encephalitis Virus (LACV) in a resident of Henderson County. LACV is viral illness that is transmitted to a person through the bite of an infected mosquito, particularly the “tree hole mosquito”, and causes inflammation of the brain. La Crosse is the most common mosquito-borne virus in North Carolina, occurring mostly in the western part of the state.

“Although summer is winding down, this case is a reminder that we still need to be vigilant about the threat of illness from mosquitoes,” said Crystal O’Dell, RN, FNP, Director of Nursing at the Department of Public Health. Mosquito borne illness is most common in the months of July, August and September.

Symptoms of LACV can occur from a few days to a couple of weeks after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and tiredness. Severe disease involving encephalitis occurs most commonly in children under age 16 and is often accompanied by seizures. Many people infected with LACV do not develop symptoms at all. However, in rare cases LACV can cause coma, paralysis, long term disability or death.

“There is no vaccine for LACV. Your best defense against LACV or other mosquito-borne diseases is to prevent mosquito bites,” said O’Dell. “Mosquitoes that spread LACV are most active during the daytime from spring through late fall.”

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Steps to reduce exposure to mosquito bites include the following:

- Use insect repellent.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeves, pants and socks.
- Avoid peak biting hours.
- Install and repair screens on windows and doors.
- Keep mosquitoes from laying eggs near your residence.

For additional information on mosquito-borne illnesses and ways to prevent mosquito bites, visit hendersoncountync.gov/health. Under the Community Interest tab, click on Fight the Bite.

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