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**West Nile Virus Frequently Asked Questions-Non-Medical  
July 2007**

**I found a dead bird, should I report it?**

There is no need to report dead birds to the Health Department. No testing of dead birds is being done this year.

**What should I do with the dead bird?**

You can dispose of the bird in your garbage.

**Should I do anything special when throwing away the dead bird?**

There is currently no evidence that West Nile Virus can be spread directly from birds to people. However, dead birds can carry a variety of diseases and, therefore, should never be handled with bare hands.

To dispose of a dead bird, use plastic or vinyl gloves to carefully place it in a double plastic bag. Or you may use a doubled plastic bag as a glove to pick up the bird. Then wrap the bird in the bag, tie it off, and place it in the outdoor trash. Wash your hands with soap and water when finished.

**I found a dead squirrel, rabbit, etc, should I call the Health Department?**

The Health Department does not currently need to know about dead animals. You can put the dead animal in your garbage. It is important to never touch a dead animal with your bare hands. Use plastic or vinyl gloves, a doubled plastic bag as a glove, or a shovel to pick up the animal and place it in a double plastic bag. The bag can be placed in the garbage. Individuals calling to report unusual occurrences in wildlife, such as unusual number of sick or dead animals may contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist in Maquoketa at (563) 652-3132.

**Can West Nile Virus cause illness in dogs or cats?**

Dogs and cats can become infected when bitten by an infected mosquito. It is unlikely that most pet owners would notice any unusual symptoms or behavior in cats or dogs that become infected with WNV. If you have more questions about West Nile Virus in your pets, call your veterinarian.

**Can I use insect repellent on my pets?**

DEET-based repellents, which are recommended for humans, are not approved for veterinary use (largely because animals tend to ingest them when licking.) Talk with your veterinarian for advice about the appropriate product for use on your pet.

**I have standing water in my backyard, what should I do?**

It is important to understand that no matter what we do, we can not eliminate all standing water and some standing water is important for the environment. The Health Department is encouraging that you eliminate the artificial mosquito breeding grounds you can by:

- cleaning gutters
- emptying standing water in flower pots,
- properly disposing of used tires
- dumping buckets
- cleaning up any trash that can collect water
- changing the water in bird baths, pet bowls and wading pools often
- keeping your swimming pool cleaned and chlorinated and dumping the water that may collect on the cover

These efforts make the biggest difference in eliminating mosquito breeding grounds.

**Is there going to be any spraying for mosquitoes?**

At the current time, there are no plans for community-wide mosquito control efforts in Scott County. The most effective way to protect yourself from mosquito bites is to eliminate the mosquito breeding grounds that you can (see questions above) and use an insect repellent that has DEET in it.

For more information on West Nile Virus in Iowa check out the Iowa Department of Public Health website [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/wnv\\_surveillance.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/wnv_surveillance.asp)

**For medical questions, check out the Medical Frequently Asked Questions, or refer the caller to their personal physician.**

**For questions on transmission of WNV by transfusion, refer callers to the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center at 563-359-5401.**

**For answers to other West Nile Virus Questions, refer the caller to the Scott County Health Department at 563-326-8618.**