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According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), most often West Nile Virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread West Nile Virus to humans and other animals. According to the health department, in areas where the virus has been detected, very few mosquitoes in that area actually carry the virus.

The City of Burleson has been participating in the mosquito surveillance program for more than five years. The 2008 mosquito surveillance program started in May and will end Oct. 31. Following a recent confirmed report of a human becoming infected with West Nile Virus in Burleson, City officials have worked with county health officials to do a special round of trapping and surveillance in that resident's neighborhood, to see if any mosquitoes test positive. Mosquito tests have come back positive for West Nile Virus in years past, but none during the 2008 surveillance season.

Just because no West Nile-positive mosquitoes have been successfully trapped for testing this year, there is no guarantee that Burleson is West Nile-free. It means no infected mosquitoes have been caught, so it is still imperative that residents continue to take steps to protect themselves.

The City's neighborhood services department and the county health department advise residents to stay indoors at dusk and at dawn, when mosquitoes are most active; use repellent that contains up to 20 percent DEET; dress in long sleeves and pants when outside; and drain standing water in yards and neighborhoods.

Fall brings with it the end of the traditional mosquito breeding season, so the risk should decrease for awhile.

For more information about the West Nile Virus, contact the health department at 817-321-4700 or log on to the City of Burleson web site at www.burlesontx.com, click on "Departments," and go to Neighborhood Services. From there, click on "environmental services," then the West Nile Virus link in the list of programs and services.

For more information, contact Bianca Chafin, environmental programs specialist for the City of Burleson, at 817-447-5410, extension 269. For more information about this release, call the public information officer at 817-447-5400, ext. 286.