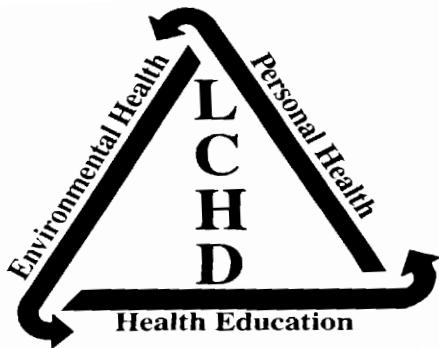


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 1, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
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For Immediate Release

"Health Department Begins Vector Surveillance"

Ottawa, IL – There will be a slight change in the way the LaSalle County Health Department conducts their vector surveillance program for the 2025 season (May 1 through October 15, 2025). The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has notified all local health departments that the collection of dead birds for West Nile virus testing will not be conducted due to the ongoing H5N1 avian influenza outbreak. Therefore, the LaSalle County Health Department will not be collecting dead birds as part of the vector surveillance program during this time frame. Reports of five or more dead birds found in LaSalle County during this time frame should be made to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) District Wildlife Biologist for LaSalle County by calling (779) 702-8274 or call the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services, at 1-866-487-3297 to determine if domesticated bird samples should be collected for testing.

How do I dispose of dead birds on my property?

Given the concern regarding influenza in wild birds (especially waterfowl, aquatic birds, and birds of prey), the following are tips to reduce the risk of avian influenza spreading to people who may need to pick up dead birds on their property. While it is unlikely that handling dead birds would lead to human infection, it is best to be cautious. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when around dead birds. In the case of not having that PPE, the following guidance can be used:

1. Don't use bare hands to pick up a dead bird or animal.
2. Use disposable waterproof gloves and/or an inverted plastic bag to pick up the dead bird(s). Double the plastic bag with the bird(s) inside and dispose in the trash where it cannot be accessed by children or animals.
3. After handling a bird, avoid touching your face with gloved or unwashed hands.
4. After the bird(s) are disposed of, take gloves off first and put into a plastic bag for disposal.
5. Wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

If you should develop flu-like symptoms within ten days of disposing of a group of dead birds, contact the LaSalle County Health Department. For additional information on disposal of dead birds, please visit:

[IDPH Safe Dead Bird Disposal \(Less than 5 Birds\)](#)

[Safe Dead Bird Disposal \(5 or more Birds\)](#)

Mosquito Collection and Testing

As in prior years, Health Department staff are getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes for West Nile virus. The mosquito collection and testing equipment were purchased with grant money. Testing will begin once the weather stays consistently warm and will continue through the fall months. Multiple mosquito collection sites are utilized and they are typically moved throughout the county during the surveillance season. Collected mosquitoes are placed in a freezer to inactivate and then they are sorted out for testing. The female Culex pipiens (common house mosquito) are the only mosquitoes tested, as they bite for blood meals. The Health Department will report any positive mosquito batches to the public.

Larvicide Distribution

The Health Department also utilizes grant money to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide, which is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites. The larvicide will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

Additionally, the Health Department, through a grant, offers larvicide to property owners looking to reduce mosquito breeding sites. Property owners are encouraged to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. NATULAR® DT, is a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The larvicide can be picked up at the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa –8:00 a.m.-4:30p.m.). Each package contains 12 tablets. At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household.**

For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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