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West Nile virus is transmitted to humans by a bite from an infected mosquito. The mosquito acquires the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but others may become ill three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Only about two persons out of 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. West Nile virus can develop into a serious illness therefore consult with your doctor if you feel you may have been bitten by an infected mosquito. The best way to prevent West Nile disease or other mosquito-borne illnesses such as Zika virus is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include:

- If possible, avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Use prevention methods whenever mosquitoes are present.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Change water in birdbaths weekly. Properly maintain wading pools and stock ornamental ponds with fish. Cover rain barrels with 16-mesh wire screen. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

Although no breeding populations of the mosquitoes that carry Zika Virus have been established in Kane County, it is important to note that the same precautions mentioned above will help to prevent the breeding of these mosquitoes as well.

Additional information about West Nile virus (www.kanehealth.com/west_nile.htm) and Zika virus (<http://www.kanehealth.com/zika.htm>) can be found on the Kane County Health Department's Web site or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Web site at www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm and <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/diseases-and-conditions/zika-cdc>.