

West Nile Virus detected on New York's Staten Island

July 10 2012

The West Nile Virus has been detected in New York City, officials said Tuesday as they urged residents to take precautions against the mosquito-borne disease.

While no human case has been reported, infected [mosquitoes](#) were found on Staten Island, one of the city's five boroughs, the health department said in a statement.

Most cases in humans are benign, with only minor symptoms. But extreme occurrences can result in tremors, fever, coma and a lethal swelling of the [brain tissue](#) known as [encephalitis](#). It can also cause meningitis.

First discovered in Uganda in 1937, the virus is carried by birds and spread to humans by mosquitoes. It is indigenous to Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia.

"[West Nile Virus](#) has been detected on Staten Island, but simple precautions can help protect you and your family," said New York City Health Commissioner Thomas Farley.

As authorities set up additional traps and treat catch basins in the affected areas of New Dorp Beach and Buls Head on Staten Island, residents should wear mosquito repellent when outdoors and cover their arms and legs if outside at dawn and dusk, he said.

"People over the age of 50 should be especially cautious, since they are most likely to develop the serious illness if they contract the virus," he added.

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