

# Massachusetts public health officials announce four new human cases of West Nile Virus

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced four additional human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in the state this year. This brings the total number of WNV cases to seven. Three of the four cases are male – one in his 40s, one in his 60s, and one in his 80s. All were exposed to WNV in Middlesex County. WNV was also diagnosed in a female under the age of 19 with exposure in Bristol County.

As a result of information obtained during case investigations on where the four individuals were exposed to the virus, the communities of Cambridge, Newton, Somerville, and Watertown in Middlesex County were elevated to high risk for WNV. Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Sudbury, Waltham, Wayland, Weston, and Winchester, all in Middlesex County, were elevated to moderate risk. The municipalities of Dighton, Fall River, and Swansea in Bristol County were also elevated to moderate risk.

Most WNV virus activity this year has been focused in an area around Boston and includes parts of Norfolk, Middlesex, and Essex counties.

There had been three cases of WNV already reported in Massachusetts this year. In 2019, there were five human cases of WNV infection. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. Most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. Updated case information is available at [atmass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update](https://atmass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update).

When present, WNV symptoms tend to include fever and flu-like illness. In rare cases, more severe illness can occur.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.