

West Nile Virus has now reached Washington County

A dead crow found in Washington County has tested positive for West Nile Virus, according to county and state public health officials. The bird was found in Beaverton and was tested at Oregon State University's Veterinarian Diagnostic Laboratory in Corvallis.

West Nile Virus has been moving slowly across the United States since 1999 and first came to Oregon in 2004. The risk of infection and serious illness is low; humans can get the virus only from mosquitoes that have fed on infected birds.

Most people infected with West Nile virus will have no

symptoms or a mild, flu-like illness. Fewer than one percent of infected individuals will develop brain or nervous system illness, such as meningitis or encephalitis. Anyone can contract the virus, but people over the age of 50, and people with suppressed immune systems, are most susceptible to developing serious symptoms.

The following preventive actions are recommended:

- Use mosquito repellent, preferably one containing DEET, Picardin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow the directions on the label carefully. When applying repellent to children, first rub it on your hands then on each child.

- Eliminate all sources of standing water, including clogged gutters, birdbaths and old tires.

- Avoid playing and working outdoors at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors.

- Fit screen doors and windows tightly to avoid flying mosquitoes from entering homes.

- Discuss the risk of West Nile infection with your veterinarian and consider vaccinating any horses you may own.

Some bird species, including crows, ravens, jays and starlings, are especially susceptible to West Nile Virus. Although there is no evidence that a person can get West Nile Virus from picking up a dead bird, public health authorities recommend avoiding handling dead birds with bare hands. To report finding birds that have no obvious signs of trauma and have been dead less than 24 hours, call the following number for your county:

- Washington County Environmental Health Office, (503) 846-8722.

- Columbia County Public Health, 503-397-4651

- Clatsop County Public Health, 503-325-8500

Washington County residents who own ponds may obtain free "Mosquito Fish," called gambusia, which eat mosquito larvae, by calling Christine Buhl at 503-846-8722. Additional information is available from the Washington County West Nile Prevention Information Line at (503) 846-8890 or the Washington County Web site at <www.co.washington.or.us/mosquito>.

Free self-defense class Saturday

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) is offering a self-defense class to the public on Saturday, September 23, at the CCSO training/conference room at 901 Port Avenue, St. Helens. Class will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 1:00 p.m. The class will be offered free of charge to Columbia County residents.

The course will be taught by two Certified Defensive Tactics Instructors. The course is designed to teach participants skills to protect themselves in situations that could result in

serious assault or death. This course will be taught in "hands on" format.

All participants are asked to bring a bottle of water and to wear comfortable clothing, socks and tennis shoes. Participants under the age of 18 are required to have a parent present and sign a release form in order to participate in the class.

Class space is limited and pre-registration is required to attend. Registration forms are available from Cassy Miller, Victim Specialist/Program Coordinator, at 503-366-4649.

Whole grains get bad rap, try some

Whole grains often get a bad rap from adults and children used to eating highly processed grain foods such as white breads, sugary cereals, cakes and pastries. Whole grain products are sometimes called "sawdust," "straw," "hay," "horse food," "weeds," and the ubiquitous "yucky." It isn't so. Whole grain foods are delicious, rich in taste and textures and loaded with fiber, vitamins and minerals, naturally. The USDA recommends that one third of all grains consumed

should be whole grains because of their higher nutrient value.

If you or your family aren't enthusiastic about cooking with and eating whole grains because of their taste and texture you can slowly ease into a diet rich in whole grains by making small changes first:

- Serve popcorn for snacks in place of sugary sweets.

- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal to your favorite cookie recipe. You can replace half of

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Join the Memory Walk for Alzheimer's on Sept. 30

The Memory Walk for Alzheimer's disease, sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association, will be held September 30, at Olde Towne Plaza Park in St. Helens. More than 150 people are expected to partici-

pate in this year's event to raise funds and promote progress surrounding Alzheimer's.

The Memory Walk is the largest national fundraising event for Alzheimer disease support programs and is held in

over 600 communities across the country. Participants have raised more than \$200 million for programs and services to support people with Alzheimer's disease.

Registration starts at 9:00 a.m. To register in advance or make a donation, contact the Alzheimer's Association at <http://mw06.kintera.org/StHelensOR> or call 1-800-733-0402.

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