



Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Positive West Nile Virus Mosquitoes in Red Willow County

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department reports mosquitoes in three mosquito pools have tested positive for West Nile Virus in Red Willow County. West Nile Virus is a virus primarily spread to humans by infected mosquitoes. The virus can cause flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, rash, body aches and joint pain. It can also cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). Of people infected with WNV, 70-80% will have no symptoms.

West Nile virus (WNV) came to the attention of public health officials in the United States in 1999. Every state except Alaska has detected West Nile Virus. WNV is NOT spread from person to person or from animal to person. It is NOT spread by handling live or dead infected birds or by eating infected birds or animals.

“It is important to be vigilant and avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes,” explains Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse. “There are a number of insect repellents containing products such as DEET or Picaridin which can help keep mosquitoes from biting.”

Additional tips will help prevent mosquito bites:

- ✓ Wear shoes, socks, long sleeve shirts and pants when mosquitoes are most active.
- ✓ Install/repair window and door screens.
- ✓ Empty standing water from containers such as gutters, buckets, pool covers, and tires.
- ✓ Aerate ponds or stock them with fish.
- ✓ Use larvicide such as mosquito dunks for water that cannot be drained.

Mosquitoes rest in dark, humid areas and typically lay their eggs near bodies of water. The use of larvicide to treat water is one method to reduce mosquitoes. Outdoor flying insect repellent may also be utilized to reduce the number of mosquitoes.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the webpage at www.swhealth.ne.gov or social media pages on Facebook or Twitter. Information is also available at both offices: McCook: 404 West 10th Street (one block north of Arby's) or Imperial: 501 Broadway (south entrance). You may reach Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223 or 308-882-4269. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves nine counties including Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow.

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