



Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Sarah Minnick, Program Manager 308-345-4223

West Nile Virus Positive Human Case in Southwest Nebraska

A human case of West Nile Virus has been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) from the nine-county health district. This is a positive clinical case of West Nile Virus currently receiving medical care.

“This is a good reminder for everyone to continue taking preventive measures against mosquito bites,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “We have detected West Nile positive mosquito pools in the health district in the 2023 season. Please be aware that mosquitoes that are present in southwest Nebraska may potentially be carrying West Nile Virus.”

Symptoms of West Nile Virus take anywhere from 3 to 14 days to appear after a mosquito bite. Most people do not notice any symptoms, but about 20% of people will have a fever and possibly experience headaches, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. These symptoms usually go away in less than a week, but fatigue and weakness can last several weeks or months. Rest, fluids, and over-the-counter pain medications may relieve some symptoms.

In rare cases, people need to be hospitalized to receive supportive treatment after being infected with West Nile Virus. In these severe cases, West Nile Virus enters the brain and spinal cord leading to stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma, or death. Seek medical care right away if you notice any loss of movement, muscle tremors, or feeling disoriented or confused.

There is no specific treatment for West Nile Virus. The best way to avoid becoming sick is to take actions to prevent mosquito bites. This includes wearing insect repellent and lightweight long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. After all the recent rain, it is a good time to check around your yard or property and turn over and drain any items that may have standing water in them.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at www.swhealth.ne.gov or by calling 308-345-4223, one number, three locations – McCook, Imperial and Ogallala. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Information can also be found on SWNPHD’s Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

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