

***For immediate release***

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## **Standing Water after Flooding Brings Health Concerns**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department and Dundy & Hitchcock County Emergency Manager, Patrick Gerdes would like the public to be aware of some health concerns after the flood waters have ended.

“Standing water brings several issues to the forefront,” explains Gerdes. “We would like citizens to be very careful around these areas and reduce their health risks by using precautions.”

Standing water can act as breeding sites for mosquitoes. This increases the potential for mosquito bites and exposure to West Nile Virus. “You may not see an immediate increase in mosquitoes,” states Gerdes. “Flood waters may have disrupted many areas but once mosquitoes adjust and find the stagnant water, you will see an increase in the number of mosquitoes.”

“One of your best defenses of preventing West Nile Virus is to apply mosquito repellent,” states Melissa Propp, Public Health Surveillance Nurse at SWNPHD. “Mosquito repellent helps reduce your exposure to mosquitoes that may carry the virus.”

By using repellent, it allows you to continue to play, work, and enjoy the outdoors with a lower risk of getting bit. Apply repellent when you go outside, even if it’s only for a few minutes. The most effective repellents contain DEET.

Other precautions include dressing in long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when you’re outside. You are encouraged to avoid outdoor activity around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are more active.

Additional concerns from standing water include possible sewage or unknown objects under the surface. Use caution in these areas and practice good handwashing techniques to ensure that you stay safe. If you do have a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with soil, sewer or storm water, treat the wound with soap and clean, then apply an antibiotic ointment. Contact your medical provider to find out if a tetanus shot is needed.

SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street (1 block north of Arby’s) in McCook. You can also follow us on [Facebook.com/swnphd](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth). Southwest Nebraska Public

Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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