

September 16, 2016

For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse 308-345-4223 nurse@swhealth.ne.gov

St. Louis Encephalitis Virus Positive Mosquitos Reported in SWNPHD Health District

Mosquitos in Chase County have tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV) according to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. This follows West Nile Virus (WNV) positive mosquitos and five confirmed positive WNV human cases in the health district.

“This is the first confirmed group of mosquitos in southwest Nebraska with St. Louis encephalitis virus,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse at SWNPHD. “SLEV is very similar to West Nile virus with signs and symptoms.”

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Incubation period is from five to fifteen days after being bit by the mosquito before the onset of symptoms.
- Fever, headache, dizziness, nausea and malaise are typical symptoms.
- Signs and symptoms intensify over a period of several days to a week.
- Some patients spontaneously recover after this period while others develop signs of central nervous system infections, including stiff neck, confusion, disorientation, dizziness, tremors and unsteadiness. Coma and death can develop in severe cases.
- About 40% of children and young adults with SLEV disease develop only fever and headache or aseptic meningitis.
- Almost 90% of elderly persons with SLEV develop encephalitis.

“There is no vaccine against SLEV,” explains Propp. “Prevention is the best way to avoid SLEV and DEET in your repellent is the most effective.”

An additional protection measure is to utilize mosquito dunks in standing water that cannot be eliminated. It is a natural mosquito larvicide. It kills mosquito larvae but is harmless to birds, fish, wildlife and pets. Mosquito dunks typically last 30 days and can be purchased at retail stores.

More information on SLEV or WNV may be found at our web site www.swhealth.ne.gov or call the McCook office at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street – one block north of Arby’s.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. You can also follow us on [Facebook.com/swnphd](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth).

####