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For Immediate Release

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## **West Nile Virus Continues in Southwest Nebraska**

A seventh human case of West Nile Virus have been reported in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) health district according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

“West Nile Virus continues in southwest Nebraska,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse at SWNPHD. “We encourage everyone to make mosquito bite prevention a top priority until the first hard freeze. Eliminating the potential for breeding grounds around your home will certainly help reduce the mosquito menace around your property.”

Propp shared these suggestions:

- drain children’s wading pools when not in use
- replace water in bird baths every 3 to 4 days or use mosquito dunks
- drill a hole in tire swings or recycling containers so water can drain out
- check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out (*roof gutters can produce millions of mosquitoes each season*)
- remove discarded tires, and other items that could collect water
- clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds
- dispose of cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers
- turn over wheelbarrows
- aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish
- clean & chlorinate swimming pools not in use (*watch for stagnate water on the pool cover*)
- mosquitoes may breed in any puddle that lasts for more than four days

People with medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease are also at greater risk for serious illness with the West Nile Virus. “If you think a family member might have West Nile virus disease, consult your healthcare provider for a diagnosis,” explains Propp. “Prevention is the best way to avoid WNV and DEET in your repellent is the most effective.”

Please remember these precautions with DEET:

- Do not allow children under 10 years of age to apply repellent themselves
- Do not apply to young children’s hands, mouth or around eyes
- Do not breath in, swallow, or get into the eyes
- Do no put repellent on wounds or broken skin
- Read and follow all directions & precautions on the product label
- Store DEET out of reach of children
- To apply to face, first spray product onto hands, then rub onto face

- Use only when outdoors and wash skin with soap and water after coming indoors
- Higher concentrations of DEET may have a longer repellent effect, but concentrations over 50% provide no added protection

Propp offered the following tips to prevent mosquito bites:

- ✓ Limit time outside from dusk till dawn
- ✓ Wear long-sleeves and pants
- ✓ Repair all holes in screens
- ✓ Dump stagnant water and keep your gutters clean
- ✓ Always apply your sunscreen first, followed by DEET
- ✓ Be sure to use insect repellent with DEET and repeat every four (4) hours

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at our web site [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) or call the McCook office at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> 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 and Twitter@swpublichealth.

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