



**Southwest Nebraska**  
**Public Health Department**

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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

Two human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) from the nine-county health district. West Nile Virus is a disease that is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Nebraska has had the second highest number of West Nile cases in the country so far this year.

“This is a good reminder for everyone to continue taking preventive measures against mosquito bites,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “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 long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. After rain, 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 [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) or by calling 308-345-4223, one number, two locations – McCook 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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