



Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Avoid Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds residents to continue to avoid mosquito bites to prevent West Nile Virus.

“Taking preventive measures against mosquito bites is always worth the time,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “We have not detected any West Nile positive mosquito pools in the health district so far in 2024; however, there have been mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile in nearby counties and other areas of the state.”

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 2 out of 10 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. In severe cases, West Nile Virus can invade the brain and spine and cause stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma, or death.

There is no treatment for West Nile Virus, so the best way to avoid becoming sick is to take actions to prevent mosquito bites. This means wearing insect repellent and long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Dead wild birds can be an indication that West Nile virus is present in an area. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is not collecting or testing dead birds currently, but residents are encouraged to report dead bird sightings during West Nile Virus season (June 1 – September 30). Reports can be submitted online at bit.ly/DeadBirdReport or on the West Nile page of dhs.ne.gov.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at swhealth.ne.gov or by calling the office at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Information can also be found on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

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