

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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County fairs are fun times: Avoid dangers with insect repellent and hand sanitizers

One of the big highlights of every summer is the annual county fair. With fresh air, food vendors and quality entertainment, the fair draws crowds primarily to outdoors activities -- often in the evening or near dusk. These are prime feeding times and grounds for hungry mosquitoes, as well.

Mosquitoes are not only a nuisance they can also carry dangerous viruses such as West Nile Virus. Tabi Prochazka, environmental coordinator at Panhandle Public Health District, said West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. In turn, the mosquito can pass the virus to humans.

PPHD continues to collect dead birds and trap mosquitoes for additional surveillance to determine if the virus is present in the area. To report a dead bird please call PPHD at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Testing will only be conducted on birds that have died within 24 hours, with no evidence of maggots or rotting.

“Don’t be mosquito meat. Use DEET!” Prochazka advises. Simple precautions are available:

- using a repellent that contains DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, Deet is also safe for children, if used according to manufacturer’s directions,
- wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks,
- taking extra precautions when going outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active and
- removing standing water where mosquitoes breed.

Hand sanitizers will also be available at the fairs near food vendors and livestock areas. Be sure to use hand sanitizer after visiting the animal barns and before eating.

County Fairs in the Panhandle

Morrill County-July 25-July 31

Dawes County- July 30-August 6

Cheyenne County - July 25-August 1

Sioux County - July 30 -August 8

Sheridan County - August 6-14

Kimball County-August 4-9

Banner County- August 4-9

Garden County-August 5-8

Box Butte County - August 8-15

Deuel County-August 11-14

For additional information about physical activity and nutrition, visit www.pphd.org. The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.