

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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West Nile Virus is a concern in the Panhandle: Residents urged to practice prevention tips

Mosquito pools from the Panhandle have recently tested positive for West Nile Virus. "Finding the virus in mosquito's serves as a warning that the virus continues to pose a risk to people in the Panhandle," said Tabi Prochazka, Environmental Health Coordinator for Panhandle Public Health District.

Panhandle residents are urged to exercise caution outdoors. "It only takes one mosquito bite for you to become infected with West Nile Virus", stated Prochazka.

Follow these simple precautions to protect yourself and your family.

- Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Take extra precautions when going outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of standing water.
- Add larvicides to animal drinking troughs.
- Keep window screens in good repair.

West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. West Nile fever includes flu-like symptoms such as fever and muscle weakness. Other symptoms may involve nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, and/or a skin rash on the chest, stomach or back. Symptoms of the more serious West Nile encephalitis includes inflammation of the brain, disorientation, convulsions and paralysis. Those over 50 or with weakened immune systems are most vulnerable to the disease and are more likely to experience serious consequences.

West Nile Virus is in the panhandle and surveillance is in full swing. Mosquito trapping sites are located in four Panhandle counties and will continue through the first freeze this fall. Please call if you find a bird that has died within 24 hours with no known cause of death so we can report it: 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173 ext 107. PPHD will no longer be collecting dead birds to be sent in for testing this season.

To report a dead bird, for further information on West Nile Virus or to download an informational podcast on the topic, please visit www.pphd.org or call 308-487-3600 x107 or toll free 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.