

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

August 12, 2013

For more information, contact: Becky Corman, 308-262-2217 or 1-866-701-7173

West Nile Virus Case Reported

The first human case of West Nile Virus for Panhandle Public Health District has been reported. The first case is a resident of Sheridan County in the 65 years and older age range.

West Nile 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 include 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.

"It is very important that people are taking the necessary precautions to prevent mosquito bites," said Becky Corman, public health nurse with Panhandle Public Health District. "It only takes one mosquito bite for you to become infected with West Nile Virus."

To avoid mosquito bites, Panhandle Public Health District recommends:

- Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks;
- Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active; and
- Eliminating standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

Standing water should be drained whenever possible or treated with bacillus thuringensis (BTI) briquettes. Use the briquettes in places where mosquitoes breed such as ponds, bird baths, unused swimming pools, flower pots, rain barrels, old tires, and any other place where water collects.

PPHD is currently testing mosquito samples and dead birds for the virus. Panhandle residents are encouraged to report birds that have died of apparent unknown causes. All varieties of birds are being tested again this year and must be deceased for less than 24 hours and show no signs of physical trauma or decay in order to be collected for testing.

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 x106 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.