

Panhandle

Public Health District

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For Immediate Release:

Stay Safe This Summer: Prevent Mosquito and Tick Bites

As summer approaches, increased outdoor activities bring a higher risk of mosquito and tick bites. These bites can transmit serious diseases such as West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and Zika virus. Panhandle Public Health District urges everyone to take preventive measures to protect themselves and their families.

Mosquito Bite Prevention:

1. **Use Insect Repellent:** Apply EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone. Follow product instructions.
2. **Wear Protective Clothing:** Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Treat clothing and gear with permethrin.
3. **Avoid Peak Mosquito Hours:** Mosquitoes are most active during dawn and dusk. Limit outdoor activities during these times.
4. **Eliminate Standing Water:** Empty and clean birdbaths, gutters, planters, and any other items that can collect water. Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water. You can request mosquito dunks from PPHD to help with water that is not easily drainable.
5. **Use Mosquito Nets and Screens:** Ensure windows and doors have screens to keep mosquitoes out. Use mosquito nets if sleeping outdoors or in areas without adequate screens.
6. **Report Dead Birds:** The public is also urged to report dead birds if they find them on their property. You can report birds online at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycudv3tc>.

Tick Bite Prevention:

1. **Avoid Tick-Infested Areas:** Steer clear of tall grasses, bushes, and leaf litter. Stick to the center of trails when hiking.
2. **Use Tick Repellent:** Apply repellents with 20-30% DEET on exposed skin and clothing. Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin.
3. **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Wear light-colored clothing to easily spot ticks. Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants to reduce skin exposure.
4. **Perform Tick Checks:** Conduct thorough tick checks after outdoor activities. Examine underarms, behind ears, around the waist, and other hidden areas.
5. **Shower After Being Outdoors:** Showering within two hours of coming indoors can help wash off unattached ticks and makes them easier to find.
6. **Care for Pets:** Check pets for ticks regularly. Use tick prevention products recommended by your veterinarian.

The Panhandle reported 148 human cases of West Nile virus and 224 positive mosquito pools for West Nile in 2023 with the addition of 13 cases of equine West Nile virus. In the State of Nebraska, 35 tickborne disease cases were reported in 2023, with 17 cases hospitalized and one death reported. If you are feeling ill and have recently been bitten by a tick or have been outdoors where you may have encountered ticks or mosquitoes, please consult your physician to determine if you have been exposed to a possible tick or mosquito related disease.

To request further information on West Nile virus or tick bite prevention, please visit www.pphd.ne.gov or call 308-487-3600 x108. 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.