

The logo for Panhandle Public Health District features the word "Panhandle" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below it, the words "Public Health District" are written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. The text is set against a background of two overlapping purple rectangular shapes, one slightly offset to the left and top of the other.

Public Health District

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Practice mosquito bite prevention this fall

Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) would like to remind Panhandle residents that while the air seems a bit cooler, mosquitoes have not gone away and are still active well into the fall season. As fall sports begin, PPHD encourages all students, athletes, coaches, and fans to practice mosquito prevention to help fight the spread of West Nile virus.

PPHD routinely traps mosquitoes in the Panhandle area and several traps have had mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus this season. Mosquitoes are tested well into the fall season until the first freeze. Cases of West Nile virus also continue to pick up as the season progresses. Football games are especially important to remember to wear insect repellent due to the time of day they are held and the variable conditions of the field.

There have been five reported cases of human clinical positives for West Nile in the Panhandle. West Nile demonstrates flu-like symptoms that can include a slight fever and headaches, though 8 out of 10 people never develop symptoms. Severe symptoms of West Nile can lead to encephalitis which can cause inflammation of the brain, disorientation, convulsions and paralysis. People with compromised immune systems are especially susceptible to this disease. Prevention is the best way to avoid mosquito bites and protect yourself from West Nile.

This year the State of Nebraska has been testing mosquitoes for Cache Valley virus and Jamestown Canyon virus. Two Jamestown Canyon mosquito pools and one Cache valley mosquito pool were detected this season in Douglas County and Lincoln County, respectively. Cache Valley and Jamestown Canyon virus are like West Nile, they are diseases that can cause sicknesses such as meningitis. Human cases are rare in the United States for these viruses, but caution is still advised, and prevention is recommended to prevent mosquito bites.

PPHD encourages mosquito bite prevention by recommending the following tips:

- Wear long pants and long sleeves, especially if outdoors during dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Check for standing water in the area and if any is present, drain immediately.

For further information on West Nile virus, please visit www.pphd.ne.gov or call 308-487-3600 x108 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.