

# NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

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## **Human West Nile Virus Case Reported**

The first human case of West Nile virus for the Panhandle has been reported. There are now two cases of human West Nile in Nebraska along with one case of human blood donor positive.

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.

The best way to prevent West Nile is to practice prevention of mosquito bites. To avoid mosquito bites, Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) 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 and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are currently testing mosquito samples for the virus.

For further information on West Nile virus please visit [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) 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.