

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Fight the Bite This Summer

June officially brings the start of summer and the beginning of mosquito season. Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) has once again begun West Nile virus (WNV) surveillance activities to monitor the presence of the virus in the Panhandle.

PPHD in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services conducts West Nile virus tracking through the months of May to October. PPHD uses the Center for Disease Control (CDC) light traps to collect mosquitoes for testing. If you see one of these traps around the area during summer months, that means there are ongoing efforts to track mosquitoes. Once mosquitoes are collected, they are sent to the Nebraska DHHS Public Health Environmental Lab.

Panhandle residents are urged to exercise caution when outdoors. To avoid mosquito bites, PPHD recommends:

- Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;
- Wearing long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks in wooded areas or areas of tall grass;
- Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active;
- Eliminating standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites
- Keep window screens in good repair, and;
- Use larvicides that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis* in standing water that is not easily drainable.

Nebraska had reported low numbers of human cases in 2020 but with the increase of people back outside for 2021, prevention will still be the best way to keep you and your family protected against WNV. Call or visit the Panhandle Public Health District office in Hemingford to receive DEET wipe towelettes for your next ball game, trip to the lake, or camping trip and help fight the bite this summer. PPHD also has limited quantities of mosquito dunks, which can be used for large areas of standing water that cannot be readily drained.

To request further information on West Nile virus, please visit 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.