



Public Health

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: July 22, 2013

HEADLINE: Protect Yourself From West Nile Virus

LEWISTON, IDAHO –Public Health – Idaho North Central District would like to remind you to protect yourself and your family against West Nile Virus (WNV). No human cases have been reported to date in Idaho this year, but other positive mosquito pools have been reported in Ada, Canyon, Owyhee, Payette Counties, and in Malheur County, Oregon.

West Nile Virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito; it is not spread from person-to-person or from infected animals to people. Although rare, the virus can lead to serious illness, especially in people over the age of 50. West Nile cases typically peak in mid-August or early September, just in time for students returning to school and outdoor school activities, so additional precautions should be taken. Mosquitoes can bite anytime, but those carrying West Nile are generally more active between dusk and dawn.

Public Health – Idaho North Central District encourages you to protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus with these simple prevention tips.

Avoid Mosquito Bites:

- Cover up when outdoors. Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, and socks from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use insect repellants to avoid mosquito bites. DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (PMD), and IR3535 are all EPA approved repellants. Follow label instructions carefully.
- DEET is approved by the American Academy of Pediatricians for children over 2 months of age.

Mosquito Proof your Surroundings:

- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Get rid of standing water on your property. Even small amounts of water such as flowerpots, old tires, etc. can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Clean or drain birdbaths and non-circulating decorative ponds weekly.
- Clean rain gutters.
- Repair or install screens on your doors and windows.

Although most infections do not lead to illness, one out of five who become infected with the West Nile Virus show symptoms such as fever, headaches, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash. These symptoms can last for only a few days, or may last for several weeks. Symptoms typically occur from 3 to 14 days after the bite from an infected mosquito. There is no specific treatment for infection but in more severe cases, people usually need hospitalization.

West Nile virus does not usually affect most domestic animals, including dogs and cats, but can cause severe illness in horses and certain species of birds. Although there is not a vaccine available for people, there are several vaccines available for horses. People are advised to contact their veterinarian about vaccinating their horses.

West Nile Virus is here to stay in Idaho, protect yourself and your family!

For further information on West Nile Virus please contact Ed Marugg, Environmental Health Director, Public Health – Idaho North Central District at 208-799-3100 or visit www.idahopublichealth.com.