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For Immediate Release

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Avoid Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds residents to continue to avoid mosquito bites to prevent West Nile Virus.

“This is a reminder for everyone to continue taking preventive measures against mosquito bites,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “We have not detected any West Nile positive mosquito pools in the health district in the 2022 season; however, until there is a hard freeze, mosquitoes are still present in southwest Nebraska and may potentially be carrying West Nile Virus.”

The incubation time for the development of symptoms of West Nile Virus takes about 3-14 days. Around 8 out of 10 people who become infected with West Nile Virus will not experience any symptoms. Two in 10 people may experience symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea. In severe cases, West Nile Virus can invade the brain and spinal cord leading to stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma, or death.

There is no treatment for West Nile Virus, so the best way to avoid becoming sick is to take actions to prevent mosquito bites. This means wearing insect repellent and long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Eight cases of West Nile Virus have been reported in Nebraska so far in 2022. This is an unusually low number and may be due to the extremely dry conditions across the state this year. Normally more West Nile cases are identified in September of each year.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at www.swhealth.ne.gov or by calling the McCook office at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Information can also be found on Facebook and Instagram.

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