

NEWS RELEASE

July 3, 2013

For immediate release

Contact: Tami Hershowitz, Health Educator or Denise Ringenberg, Assistant Director 308-345-4223

Receive DEET Wipes from Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

McCook - Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages area residents to be on the lookout for ticks and mosquitos as you spend time outdoors. Ticks can cause ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia (deer fly or rabbit fever) and Lyme disease. Mosquitos can carry the West Nile Virus. To help prevent these diseases, SWNPHD is providing DEET wipes to daycare centers throughout their eight-county district.

“Young children are vulnerable to diseases from ticks and mosquitos,” explains Tami Herskowitz, Surveillance Nurse at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “Prevention can take a few minutes and make a lasting difference in the health of your child. I encourage all daycare centers to contact me for a supply of DEET wipes.”

These counties include: Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow. To contact Tami call 308-345-4223 or email: tami@swhealth.ne.gov to confirm free DEET wipes for you daycare center.

Symptoms of tick and mosquito-related diseases can be similar: fever, rash, chills, body aches and pains. “Taking steps to protect yourself should be part of your daily outdoor routine,” encourages Herskowitz. Prevention techniques for both include:

- Use mosquito-tick repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.
- Dress in long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when you’re outside. Dusk and dawn are times when mosquitoes are most active.
- Limit outdoor activities.
- Drain standing water around your home to reduce mosquito breeding areas.
- Do frequent tick checks after being outdoors and remove attached ticks promptly with fine-tipped tweezers.
- Remove leaf litter, tick habitat. Clear tall grasses & brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- Place a three feet wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Mow the lawn frequently.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Stack wood neatly and in a dry area. Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.
- Check your pets for ticks daily, especially after they spend time outdoors. If you find a tick on your dog, remove it right away.

SWNPHD encourages residents to be prepared and is asking for your assistance. Public health officials monitor the human health risk for West Nile virus. If you find a bird that recently died of an unknown reason and does not have sunken eyes, please report it to SWNPHD. We ask that you freeze the bird immediately for better test results. For details, please call 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is collecting dead birds for the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services testing until October 2013.

More information on diseases carried by ticks or West Nile Virus may be found at our web site www.swhealth.ne.gov or call the McCook office at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street – one block north of Arby's. You can also follow us on Facebook & Twitter.

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