

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Homeowner Tips to Reduce West Nile Virus Exposure

McCook - As you spend time outdoors with summer activities, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds you to protect yourself against West Nile Virus. West Nile Virus is spread through the bite of a mosquito that has contracted the virus from an infected bird.

“One of your best defenses is to apply mosquito repellent,” states Helena Janousek, Health Educator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “Mosquito repellent helps reduce your exposure to mosquitoes that may carry West Nile virus.”

By using repellent, it allows you to continue to play, work, and enjoy the outdoors with a lower risk of getting bit. Apply repellent when you go outdoors, even if it’s only for a few minutes. The most effective repellents contain DEET.

Other precautions include dressing in long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when you’re outside. You are encouraged to avoid outdoor activity around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are more active.

Eliminating the potential for breeding grounds around your home and spraying insecticide where adult mosquitoes hide, will certainly help reduce the mosquito menace around your property.

For example:

- drain children’s wading pools when not in use
- replace water in bird baths every 3 to 4 days
- drill a hole in tire swings so water can drain out
- check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out
- remove discarded tires, and other items that could collect water
- clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds
- dispose of cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers

According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services a Hamilton county man and Butler county man, both over the age of 50, tested positive for West Nile Virus. They are the first positive human cases seen this season, which is earlier than in past years. Most people who are infected with West Nile virus show no symptoms or experience mild illness such as a fever, headache and body aches before fully recovering.

More information on 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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