

NEWS RELEASE

August 17, 2026

For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager 308-345-4223

Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has been notified of mosquitoes testing positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in the health district, 2 weeks after mosquitoes tested positive for Cache Valley Virus. The pool of mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus was reported in Red Willow County. Over the last 10 years the health district has had over 100 positive WNV pools, so SWNPHD recommends residents take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

“This is a reminder for everyone to continue taking steps to prevent mosquito bites,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Mosquitoes in the area may potentially be carrying West Nile Virus or Cache Valley Virus and can pass those on to humans. Most people are fine after catching West Nile, but some people will become severely ill.”

The incubation time for the development of symptoms of West Nile Virus can take anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks after being bitten by a mosquito. 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 action to prevent mosquito bites. This means wearing insect repellent and long shirts and pants, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Check for standing water in yards and ditches. Drain water if possible or use mosquito dunks to kill mosquito larvae.

For questions about West Nile Virus, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow @swnphd on Facebook, You Tube and Instagram.

###