

NEWS

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Contact: Christine Myron, Public Information Officer
(208) 327-8639 | Cell: (208) 871-1712

First 2016 Human West Nile Virus Case in Idaho

Elmore County — The Central District Health Department (CDHD) is reporting a positive case of West Nile virus (WNV) in an Elmore County woman in her 30s. The woman is recovering at home. This is the first confirmed human case of WNV in Idaho this year. Nine Idaho counties, including Ada and Valley counties report positive WNV in mosquito pools this season.

“We know the disease will remain until cold weather arrives,” said Dr. Sarah Correll, Epidemiologist with CDHD. “We hope that this case serves as a reminder to everyone that they need to make every effort to prevent mosquito bites.”

West Nile virus is a potentially serious illness that is usually spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people infected with the illness show no symptoms. In more serious cases symptoms can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back. In some cases the virus can cause severe illness, especially in people over the age of 50. WNV is not contagious from person-to-person through casual contact.

To reduce the likelihood of infection, people are advised to avoid mosquitoes, particularly between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active. In addition, you should:

- Apply DEET or other EPA-approved insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing;
- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors;
- Insect-proof your home by repairing or replacing screens; and
- Reduce standing water on your property to eliminate mosquito-breeding habitat.

West Nile virus does not usually affect domestic animals, but can cause severe illness in horses and certain species of birds. Although there is no vaccine available for people, there are several vaccines available for horses. People are advised to vaccinate their horses annually.

For more information, please visit www.westnile.idaho.gov