

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

June 11, 2018

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Prevent West Nile Virus

June officially brings the start of summer and the beginning of mosquito season. Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) has once again begun West Nile virus (WNV) surveillance activities to monitor the presence of the virus in the Panhandle.

PPHD in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services conducts West Nile virus tracking through the months of May to October. PPHD traps mosquitoes at selected areas around the Panhandle and collects dead birds for lab testing.

PPHD uses the Center for Disease Control (CDC) light traps to collect mosquitoes for West Nile virus testing:



CDC Mosquito Light Trap



Mosquitoes from collection cup

If you see one of these traps around the area during summer months, that means there are ongoing surveillance efforts in this area. Once mosquitoes are collected they are sent to the Nebraska DHHS Public Health Environmental Lab for testing.

Although surveillance efforts are taking place, Panhandle residents are urged to exercise caution when outdoors. To avoid mosquito bites, PPHD recommends:

- Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;
- Wearing long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks;
- Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active;
- Eliminating standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites
- Keep window screens in good repair, and;
- Use larvicides that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis* in standing water that is not easily drainable.

Nebraska has reported 3,795 human cases of WNV since 2002, placing the state in the top five nationally. The Panhandle has several counties that have high incidences of WNV transmission in humans. Prevention is the best way to keep you and your family protected against WNV. Call or visit the Panhandle Public Health District office in Hemingford to receive DEET wipe towelettes for your next ball game, trip to the lake, or camping trip and help fight the bite this summer.

To report a dead bird or to request further information on West Nile virus, please visit www.pphd.org or call 308-487-3600 x108 or toll free 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.