

# NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

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*For more information, contact: Melissa Haas 308-487-3600 x 108 or 1-866-701-7173*

## **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 September. PPHD traps mosquitoes at selected areas around the Panhandle to help determine locations that West Nile virus is active.

PPHD uses the Center for Disease Control (CDC) light traps to collect mosquitoes for West Nile virus testing. If you see one of these traps around the area during summer months, that means there are ongoing efforts to track mosquitoes in this area. Once mosquitoes are collected, they are sent to the Nebraska DHHS Public Health Environmental Lab for testing.

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.

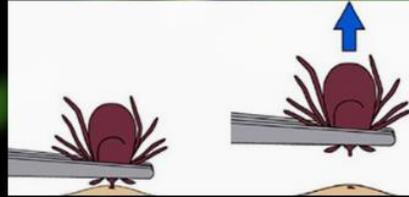
Nebraska had a reported 32 human cases of WNV in 2019. Prevention is the best way to keep you and your family protected against WNV. Call the PPHD office to request DEET wipe towelettes for your next ball game, trip to the lake, or camping trip and help fight the bite this summer. PPHD also has limited quantities of mosquito dunks, which can be used for large areas of standing water that cannot be readily drained.

June also brings ticks out in the area. Ticks can be found on pets, as well as people, after hikes in tall, grassy areas. Make sure to always check yourself for ticks after being outdoors and remove them immediately if found.

# Prevent Tickborne Disease

If you spot a tick on your body, here is how you can safely remove it:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grab the tick as close to your skin as possible.
- Pull the tweezers upward with a slow, even pressure, not a twisting or jerking motion.
- Clean your bite with rubbing alcohol, iodine scrub, or soap and water. Make sure to immediately wash your hands.



Images: CDC

## REMEMBER:

1. Always remove a tick as soon as possible.
2. If you do not get the tick mouth, leave it alone and it should fall out within a few days.
3. If you develop a rash, like what is shown on the right, within several weeks of your tick removal, see a doctor immediately.



Visit [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) for more information

Images: CDC

At this time, PPHD cannot accept dead birds for submission for testing. To request further information on West Nile virus, please visit [www.pphd.org](http://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.