

July 24, 2024 Contact: Jonna Mangeot

Infectious Disease Manager

Phone: (308) 385-5175

**Grand Island, NE -First Human Case of West Nile Virus**

**Reported in Central District**

Central District Health Department reports the first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) in our area and advises precautions. West Nile Virus is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the continental United States. It is most commonly spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Cases of West Nile occur during mosquito season, which starts in the summer and continues through fall.

Symptoms of WNV begin within 3 to 15 days after the bite of the infected mosquito. About 1 in 5 people infected by the virus show very mild or no symptoms, generally a fever and headache. Less than one percent of those infected will develop a serious illness with symptoms that may include muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, and convulsions. There are no vaccines to prevent or medicines to treat West Nile in people.

Central District tests mosquito pools regularly during mosquito season. “We expect to see West Nile Virus start up about now and continue into the fall,” explains Jonna Mangeot, Infectious Disease Manager, adding, “Although we have not seen positive mosquitoes, this first human case indicates the virus is here and now is the time to prevent mosquito bites.”

People become infected with the virus when mosquitoes feed on infected birds and then bite people. The virus does not spread person-to-person and cannot be spread to another person through mosquito bites. WNV can be transmitted through blood and organ transplantation. Those persons who were recently diagnosed with West Nile virus infection should not donate blood or bone marrow for 120 days following infection.

Prevention of West Nile is key now and through the fall. To avoid mosquito bites:

* Apply a mosquito repellent containing DEET
* Avoid going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
* Wear long sleeve shirts and long pants if out during peak mosquito hours
* Eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites
* Ensure that screen doors and windows are in good repair.

**For more information contact Central District Health Department at (308)385-5175**

