



Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Healthier and Safer Grant County

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Grant County Confirms First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2009

MOSES LAKE, WA – A Moses Lake woman in her fifties has tested positive for West Nile virus infection, becoming Grant County’s first human West Nile virus case. The Washington State Public Health Laboratories reported the test results as “confirmed” on Thursday, September 10, 2009. Eight horses and ten mosquito samples in Grant County have tested positive for West Nile virus in 2009. Statewide West Nile virus totals can be found by visiting the Washington State Department of Health at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/Surveillance09.html. This web page is updated daily at 3:00 p.m.

The woman was most likely infected in the backyard of her Moses Lake home. She has had several symptoms characteristic of West Nile virus infection and has not been hospitalized.

West Nile virus is spread to people and animals by infected mosquitoes. In 80 percent of cases, the infection does not result in any symptoms. Adults over 50 and persons with weakened immune systems are at greatest risk of serious illness from a West Nile infection.

Twenty percent of infections result in symptoms, called West Nile fever. Milder illness may include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash, and swollen lymph glands.

The more severe form of West Nile fever occurs in less than 1 percent of infections, and invades the nervous system, causing encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or other serious disorders. People with encephalitis may experience high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, and coma. Anyone with any of these symptoms should immediately contact a health care provider.

There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus and no human vaccine against it. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places mosquitoes live and breed around your home. To protect your family from mosquito bites, take these steps:

Avoid mosquito bites

- Make sure windows and doors are “bug tight.” Repair or replace screens.
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are the most active.
- Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants, and a hat when going into mosquito-infested areas, such as wetlands or woods.
- Use mosquito repellent when necessary. Read the label and carefully follow instructions. Take special care when using repellent on children.
- Mosquito repellents that contain the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are the most effective for offering long-lasting protection against mosquito bites.

Don't give mosquitoes a home

- Empty or throw away anything that holds standing water—bottles, cans, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, and toys.
- Change water in your birdbaths, fountains, wading pools, and animal troughs at least twice each week.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly; and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

Washington State's West Nile Virus Web Site: www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html

Mosquito Problems Start At Home: http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/mosquito-problems-start-at-home-poster/24_MosqPstr_E01L.pdf

Mosquito Repellent How to Use It Safely: http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/west-nile-virus-mosquito-repellent-how-to-use-it-safely/24_WNVrepel_E07L.pdf

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