

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 07/21/2021**

TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses.  
Grant County Emergency Management  
Grant County Media

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## **First Positive West Nile Virus Detected in Grant County**

MOSES LAKE, WA – Grant County Mosquito Control District No. 1 (GCMCD1) has reported that a mosquito sample collected last week has tested positive for West Nile virus, making it the first detection of the virus in Grant County, and the seventh detection statewide, for the 2021 season.

GCMCD1 covers the Greater Moses Lake area, including the Moses Lake Sand Dunes and Potholes. For more information about GCMCD#1 and to see the exact boundaries of the district, visit their website: <http://www.gcmcd1.org/>. The State's first positive mosquito sample was reported from Walla Walla County on July 1st.

In 2020, two Washington residents were diagnosed with West Nile virus disease, both of which were infected in their county of residence: Benton and Yakima counties. No human cases were reported from Grant County. Complete data can be found on the Washington State Department of Health website: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/DiseasesandChronicConditions/WestNileVirus>

So far this year there are no confirmed lab reports of human or other animal cases, however, detection of West Nile virus in the mosquito population means there is a potential for spread of the virus to humans and other vulnerable species. "Many of us are enjoying the summer activities that were postponed or cancelled last year, but we do not want anyone to get sick because of a mosquito bite. If you haven't already been taking steps to prevent mosquito bites, now is a great time to start," said Stephanie Shopbell, GCHD Environmental Health Manager.

West Nile virus is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. The risk of getting West Nile virus is low, but anyone can become infected. People over 50 years of age or who have certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease are at greater risk of serious illness. Most people who are infected with West Nile virus will not get sick. About 1 in 5 people infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. Even fewer, about 1 in 150 people infected, will have more severe symptoms including headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and coma. Contact your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of a possible West Nile virus infection, especially if you recently had mosquito bites.

## **You can take steps to prevent mosquito bites and reduce places where mosquitoes live and breed around your home:**

- 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 wooded areas.
- Use mosquito repellent. 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 work best.
- Make sure windows and doors are “bug tight” and repair or replace screens as needed.
- Eliminate mosquito-breeding areas around your home by emptying or discarding anything that holds standing water—bottles, cans, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, and toys. Change water in birdbaths, fountains, kiddie pools, and animal troughs at least twice each week. Make sure roof gutters drain properly and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall and fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

Other species at risk for West Nile virus infection are birds and horses. Certain wild birds including crows, ravens, magpies, jays and raptors are especially vulnerable. Horses are also especially vulnerable to West Nile virus and many of those infected die or have to be euthanized. Horse owners are urged vaccinate their horses and keep those vaccinations up to date. There is no human vaccine to protect against West Nile virus.

For more information about West Nile virus in Washington State, visit:  
[www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/WestNileVirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/WestNileVirus)

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