

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08/8/2023**

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

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**

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## **Mosquitoes Positive for West Nile Virus Detected in Grant County: First Such Finding This Year.**

MOSES LAKE, WA – Grant County Mosquito Control District No. 1 (GCMCD1) has reported two mosquito samples that tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) from a routine collection on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Both positive samples were collected from sites near Moses Lake. The first site is just east of Moses Lake and the second site is north of Moses Lake in the Gloyd Seeps area. It is possible for mosquitoes in other areas to carry this virus. So far, no human cases of WNV have been reported in Grant County this year. The last positive mosquito sample containing WNV in Grant County was reported in 2021.

For the 2023 season, these samples are the first detection of the virus in Grant County, and the third county detection statewide. Benton County and Yakima County were the first two counties to report the detection of West Nile virus through a joint media release published on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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/>.

**Statewide Updates** - There have been no reports of human or other animal cases testing positive for West Nile virus in Washington State so far this season. However, detection of WNV in the mosquito population means there is a potential for spread of the virus to humans and other vulnerable species. “Although most people will not get seriously ill from West Nile virus, we do not want anyone to get sick because of a mosquito bite. If you’re enjoying activities outside, be sure to take steps to prevent getting bitten ” said Stephanie Shopbell, GCHD Environmental Health Manager.

**Prevention** - 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, if possible, when mosquitoes are the most active.

- Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants and a hat when going into areas with mosquitoes.
- Use an EPA registered mosquito repellent when spending time in areas with mosquitoes. Read the label and carefully follow instructions.
  - Take special care when using repellent on children.
  - Mosquito repellents that contain the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus work best.
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin to kill or repel mosquitoes.
- 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.
- There is no vaccine to prevent WNV disease.

**Spread, Symptoms and High Risk Populations** - West Nile virus (WNV) is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the continental United States. West Nile virus is most commonly spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Disease due to West Nile virus occurs during mosquito season, which starts in the summer and continues through the fall.

Most people who are infected with WNV will not get sick. Contact your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of a possible West Nile virus infection, especially if you recently had mosquito bites.

- About 1 in 5 people infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches.
- 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.

People over 60 years of age or who have certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease are at greater risk of serious illness.

Contact your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of a possible West Nile virus infection, especially if you recently had mosquito bites.

**Treatment** – There is no medication to treat WNV disease, but hospital care can be necessary for more severely ill individuals. Persons experiencing possible symptoms of WNV disease should seek medical care, especially if bitten recently by mosquitoes.

**At Risk Animals** - 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 to keep their horses West Nile virus vaccinations up to date. Prevent WNV by preventing mosquito bites.

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)