



Healthy People in Healthy Communities

NEWS

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West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitoes Found in Elmore County

Elmore County – A single pool of West Nile Virus (WNV) positive mosquitoes has been identified in Hammett, located southeast of Mountain Home. The Elmore County Mosquito Abatement District has treated the area, and additional mosquito testing will happen this week. Throughout Elmore County this time of year, mosquito traps are set and collected mosquitoes are tested weekly.

Elmore County is part of the growing list of Idaho counties reporting mosquitoes testing positive for WNV. Four Idaho counties, including Canyon, Gem, and Payette also reported WNV-positive mosquitoes this season.

The discovery of mosquitoes carrying WNV serves as a reminder to the public to protect themselves from mosquitoes. WNV is usually contracted from the bite of an infected mosquito; it is not spread from person-to-person through casual contact. Symptoms of infection often include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and sometimes swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash. In some cases, the virus can cause severe illness, especially in people older than 50.

To reduce the likelihood of WNV infection, people are advised to avoid mosquitoes, particularly between dusk and dawn when they are most active. In addition, you should:

- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors and apply DEET or other EPA-approved insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing. Carefully follow instructions on the product label, especially for children.
- Insect-proof your home by repairing or replacing screens.
- Reduce standing water on your property; check and drain toys, trays or pots outdoors that may hold water and harbor mosquito eggs.
- Change bird baths, static decorative ponds, and animal water tanks weekly because they may provide a suitable mosquito habitat.

WNV does not usually affect domestic animals, such as dogs and cats, but it can cause severe illness in horses and certain species of birds. Although there is no vaccine available for people, there are several vaccines available for horses. People are advised to vaccinate their horses annually.

Last year, 25 Idahoans were infected with WNV, including one from Elmore County. In 2006, Idaho led the nation in West Nile Virus infections with almost 1,000 human cases, which contributed to 23 deaths.

For more information on West Nile Virus, including a tracking map by county, visit <http://westnile.idaho.gov>.

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