

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Department of Health Reports First 2017 West Nile Virus Cases in State

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has confirmed the first human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) disease for the season. Additionally, three birds from Grand Forks County have tested positive for WNV. To help avoid contracting the virus, state and local health officials urge people to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

The two cases reside in LaMoure and Barnes Counties and were not hospitalized for their illnesses. In 2016, the NDDoH received reports that 85 people had West Nile virus. Of those 85, 28 were hospitalized and two died. West Nile virus was also confirmed in five horses, one squirrel and six birds.

The NDDoH recommends residents take these precautions to avoid mosquito bites:

- Use insect repellents containing ingredients registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (or PMD) or permethrin – and apply according to manufacturer’s instructions
- Wear protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite
- Eliminate stagnant water in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (such as buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths)
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed

The common symptoms of WNV include fever, headache, body aches and rash. People with more severe illness may experience symptoms such as stiff neck, confusion, paralysis, coma and even death. Fortunately, most people infected with WNV develop the less severe form of the disease or experience no symptoms at all.

For more information about West Nile virus, contact Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378 or visit www.ndhealth.gov/wnv.

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