

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Health Officials Report Steep Increase in West Nile Virus Cases**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has seen a rise in reported West Nile virus (WNV) cases in the past week and are reminding people to continue taking precautions against mosquito bites that can cause WNV infection.

As of August 8, 2018, North Dakota reported 18 human WNV cases, up 14 cases since July 30. In addition to human cases, one horse, ten birds and 34 mosquito pools have also tested positive for WNV.

“People should be aware of the increase in mosquitoes spreading West Nile virus and take proper precautions to protect themselves from bites,” said Jenny Galbraith, epidemiologist with the NDDoH.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR 3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or permethrin and apply to clothing when outdoors. Always follow the directions on the manufacturer’s label.
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- When possible, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts while outside.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

Common symptoms of West Nile virus 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 West Nile virus develop the less severe form of the disease or develop no symptoms at all.

For more information, visit [www.ndhealth.gov/wnv](http://www.ndhealth.gov/wnv) or contact Jenny Galbraith, NDDoH, at 1.800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.

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