

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile virus positive mosquitoes present across Kansas

TOPEKA, Kan. – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is reporting West Nile virus positive mosquitoes in all four counties where mosquito surveillance is performed including Sedgwick, Shawnee, Reno and Johnson counties.

West Nile virus can be spread to people through bites from infected *Culex* species mosquitoes, but it is not contagious from person to person. Although West Nile virus has been detected in more than 60 different mosquito species in the U.S., only a few *Culex* species are known to transmit primarily West Nile virus. These species are not known to transmit Zika virus.

Symptoms range from a slight headache and low-grade fever to swelling of the brain or brain tissue and, in rare cases, death. People who have had West Nile virus before are considered immune.

KDHE recommends the following precautions to protect against West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases:

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn, but can bite at any hour. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at peak times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

West Nile virus cases are most common in the late summer and early fall months. In 2016, there were 37 cases of West Nile virus in Kansas. More than half of these cases were hospitalized, and five cases died. Birds are not tested for West Nile virus in Kansas and KDHE will not be collecting information about dead birds. If you find a dead bird, KDHE recommends that you wear gloves, place the bird in a plastic bag, and dispose of it in the garbage.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides this Web page with additional information about West Nile virus and preventing mosquito bites: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes/> or visit the KDHE website: http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/arboviral_disease.htm.

The number of humans with cases of West Nile virus are updated each Tuesday on our website here: http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/case_reports_by_county.htm.

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KDHE's mission is to protect and improve the health and environment of all Kansans.