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News Release

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HUMAN WEST NILE CASES IDENTIFIED IN CANYON & PAYETTE COUNTIES

Health Officials Encourage Southwest Idaho Residents Take Precautions

Human cases of West Nile virus have been confirmed in two Canyon County residents and one Payette County resident by Southwest District Health officials. These are the first positive human cases of West Nile in Canyon and Payette Counties for 2016. The first case in Idaho this season was reported in Elmore County.

The cases from Canyon County were a female in her teens, who was hospitalized with West Nile meningitis and is now recovering at home and a female in her 50's with West Nile fever, who was not hospitalized. The Payette County case was a male youth with West Nile fever who was not hospitalized.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness that is usually spread to animals and humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most infections do not cause symptoms, one out of five who become infected with the West Nile virus show symptoms such as fever, headaches, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph nodes, or a skin rash. These symptoms can last for only a few days, or may last for several weeks. Symptoms typically occur from 2 to 14 days after the bite from an infected mosquito. There is no specific treatment, but in more severe cases, people usually need hospitalization.

"Less than one percent, or 1 in 150 people infected with WNV develop severe, neurologic illness, such as meningitis (inflammation of the linings of the brain and spinal cord) or encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) which may be life threatening," said Randi Pedersen, Epidemiologist for Southwest District Health. "These more severe infections are marked by a high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, coma, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis."

West Nile cases typically peak in mid-August or early September, just in time for students returning to school and outdoor school activities, so additional precautions should be taken. Mosquitoes can bite anytime, but those carrying West Nile are generally more active between dusk and dawn.

Pedersen reminds all of us with active lifestyles that we can continue to participate in outdoor activities by taking some simple steps to minimize the risk of mosquito bites and by reducing mosquito habitat around our homes.

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The more you're outdoors, the higher risk you could be bitten by an infected mosquito. Precautions include:

- If possible, avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when disease-carrying mosquitoes are most active and feeding. If you must be outside at dawn or dusk, wear long sleeves, pants, and loose-fitting clothing.
- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as DEET or Picaridin (Follow manufacturers' instructions on the label.) In addition, certain products which contain permethrin are recommended for use on clothing, shoes, bed nets, and camping gear.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by draining standing water from flower pots, buckets, barrels, pool covers, and wading pools. Avoid over-irrigating your lawns, gardens, or pastures. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths and watering troughs at least twice weekly. Drill holes in tire swings or old tires so water drains out.
- Get your horses vaccinated against West Nile.

For more information on West Nile, visit SWDH's website under the A-Z Index, at www.swdh.org; or visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/westnile.

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