

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Monday, August 20, 2012

Wyoming's First 2012 Human West Nile Virus Case Reported

As many states are experiencing a very active year for West Nile virus (WNV), the Wyoming Department of Health is saying an adult male from Crook County is the state's first reported human case for 2012.

“Because many factors affect the transmission of the disease, we are unable to consistently predict what may happen with West Nile virus from year to year,” said Dr. Wendy Braund, state health officer and Public Health Division senior administrator with the Wyoming Department of Health.

“While summer may be winding down, the season for West Nile virus is not yet over. It remains important for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Braund added.

The “5 D’s” of WNV prevention include:

- 1) DAWN and 2) DUSK - Most mosquito species prefer to feed at dawn or dusk, so avoid spending time outside during these times.
- 3) DRESS - Wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt outdoors or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light-colored and made of tightly woven materials.
- 4) DRAIN - Mosquitoes breed in shallow, stagnant water. Reduce the amount of standing water by draining and/or removing it.
- 5) DEET - Use an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide). When using DEET, be sure to read and follow the label instructions. Other insect repellents such as Picaridin (KBR 3023) or oil of lemon eucalyptus can also be effective.

The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory offers free WNV testing for healthcare providers with suspected cases in their patients.

Most people infected with WNV never develop symptoms. Among those who become ill, symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. A very small percentage of infected persons develop West Nile neuroinvasive disease (i.e. meningitis or encephalitis) with symptoms such as severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis.

Three human WNV cases were reported in Wyoming last year. There were 6 human cases and no deaths in 2010; 12 human cases with 1 death in 2009; 10 human cases with no deaths in 2008; and 185 human cases with 2 deaths in 2007. The year of highest WNV activity in Wyoming was 2003 with 393 human cases and nine deaths.

More information about WNV in Wyoming is available online at www.badskeeter.org.

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