

NEWS RELEASE



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Mosquitoes in Morrow County test positive for West Nile virus

West Nile virus, a mild flu-like disease spread by mosquitoes, has been found at a site near Irrigon in northeast Oregon's Morrow County, according to Oregon Public Health officials.

Health officials advise people in Morrow County to take precautions against mosquitoes in order to avoid the risk of infection.

"The risk of contracting West Nile virus is low but we do encourage people to take appropriate precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites," said Emilio DeBess, D.V.M., M.P.V.M., Oregon Public Health veterinarian.

This is the first case of West Nile virus in Oregon this year. Washington State and California have had West Nile virus mosquito activity since early summer.

Mosquito traps are set at night in various locations throughout the county. The trapped insects are sorted by species and tested for the virus.

Humans and animals can be infected by virus-carrying mosquitoes. Health officials recommend mosquito bite protection especially in the evening hours.

Eighty percent of people infected with West Nile virus exhibit no symptoms. Of the remaining 20 percent most have very mild symptoms such as fever, headaches and nausea lasting from three to six days. In a few cases, more severe symptoms occur including convulsions or disorientation. The central nervous system also may be affected resulting in fever-related headache, aseptic meningitis or encephalitis.

(more)

DeBess says simple precautions can prevent the spread of West Nile virus:

- Eliminate sources of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes, including watering troughs, birdbaths, clogged gutters and old tires.
- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.
- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or Picardin and follow the directions on the container.
- Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

Additional information about West Nile virus is available on the DHS [West Nile website](#).

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