

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Practice mosquito bite prevention this fall

Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) would like to remind Panhandle residents that while the air seems a bit cooler, mosquitoes have not gone away and are still active well into the fall season. As fall sports begin, PPHD encourages all students, athletes, coaches, and fans to practice mosquito prevention to help fight the spread of West Nile virus.

PPHD routinely traps mosquitoes in the Panhandle area and several traps have had mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus this season. Mosquitoes are tested well into the fall season until the first freeze. Cases of West Nile virus also continue to pick up as the season progresses. Football games are especially important to remember to wear insect repellent at due to the time of day they are held and the variable conditions of the field.

There have been five reported cases of human clinical positives for West Nile in the Panhandle and two reported cases of positive horses. West Nile demonstrates flu-like symptoms that can include a slight fever and headaches, though 8 out of 10 people never develop symptoms. Severe symptoms of West Nile can lead to encephalitis which can cause inflammation of the brain, disorientation, convulsions and paralysis. People with compromised immune systems are especially susceptible to this disease. Prevention is the best way to avoid mosquito bites and protect yourself from West Nile.

PPHD encourages mosquito bite prevention by recommending the following tips:

- Wear long pants and long sleeves, especially if outdoors during dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Check for standing water in the area and if any is present, drain immediately.
- Ask your veterinarian how you can get your horse vaccinated for West Nile.

For further information on West Nile virus, please visit www.pphd.org or call 308-487-3600 x108 or toll free 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.