



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH & WELFARE**

[www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)

**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**Date: June 19, 2019**

**Contact:** Niki Forbing-Orr  
Public Information Manager  
(208) 334-0668

## **West Nile virus detected in Canyon County mosquitoes**

Mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus (WNV) were detected in Canyon County on June 14, prompting public health officials to remind people to take precautions to "Fight the Bite." The positive mosquitoes, which are the first detected in the state this year, were collected by the Canyon County Mosquito Abatement District. The positive lab results were confirmed Tuesday.

Last year, one death was reported because of WNV complications, and 11 counties across the state reported finding mosquito pools that tested positive for West Nile virus. Sixteen people and five horses were infected. This first detection of 2019 occurred in western Idaho, an area where positive mosquitoes have been found almost every year since West Nile virus was first detected in Idaho in 2004.

West Nile virus is contracted from the bite of an infected mosquito; it is not spread from person-to-person through casual contact. Symptoms often include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. In some cases, the virus can cause severe illness, especially in people over the age of 50, and may require hospitalization. On rare occasion, it can lead to death.

"This is the time of year we expect West Nile virus-positive mosquitos to be

found in Idaho,” says Dr. Christine Hahn, Division of Public Health Medical Director. “Avoiding mosquito bites is the best protection against infection with the virus.”

To reduce the likelihood of infection, take steps to avoid mosquitoes, particularly between dusk and dawn when they are most active. In addition, you should:

- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors and apply DEET or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing. DEET may be used on adults, children, and infants older than 2 months of age. Carefully follow instructions on the product label, especially for children. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- Insect-proof your home by repairing or replacing screens.
- Reduce standing water on your property; check and drain toys, trays, or pots outdoors that may hold water and harbor mosquito eggs.
- Change bird baths and static decorative ponds weekly as they may also provide a suitable mosquito habitat.

WNV does not usually affect domestic animals such as dogs and cats, but it can cause severe illness in horses and certain species of birds. Although there is no vaccine available for people, there are several vaccines available for horses. People are advised to have their horses vaccinated annually.

For the latest information, visit [www.westnile.idaho.gov](http://www.westnile.idaho.gov).

###