

July 28, 2025

For Immediate Release

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### **West Nile Virus Positive Blood Donor**

A positive blood donor case of West Nile Virus has been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) in the nine-county health district. A blood donor case means that the virus was found after a person donated blood; all donated blood is tested for West Nile Virus and many other diseases to make sure it is safe to use.

“Mosquitos are very active right now,” states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Please continue taking preventive measures against mosquito bites.”

West Nile Virus spreads from mosquitoes to people, and it is common to see human cases of West Nile after it is identified in local mosquitoes. SWNPHD reported that West Nile was found in mosquitoes in Red Willow County earlier this month. In Nebraska most human West Nile Virus cases are seen in August and September, peaking around Labor Day.

Some of the ways that you can prevent getting mosquito bites are:

- Wear insect repellent with DEET. Remember to apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.
- Check around your home for any standing water, including your gutters, and drain it.
- Repair any holes in screens on windows and doors.
- Limit time outdoors between dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you will be out during dawn and dusk, wear long sleeves and pants.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus will not have any symptoms. If you do get mosquito bites, you may experience some symptoms a few days up to a couple of weeks later, such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea. In very rare cases West Nile can affect the nervous system. If you notice muscle weakness, neck stiffness, changes in vision, confusion or convulsions, get medical attention right away.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) or by calling SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Information can also be found on SWNPHD’s Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

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