



# Panhandle Health District

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**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PHD Confirms First Locally-Acquired West Nile Virus Case in North Idaho Resident**

**KOOTENAI CO., ID** – Panhandle Health District (PHD) has confirmed a human case of West Nile virus in North Idaho. A Kootenai County resident over the age of 50 tested positive for the virus. The individual was hospitalized and is now recovering. This is the first locally-acquired human case ever reported in North Idaho.

“While several cases of West Nile virus are reported each summer, all previously reported human cases have been directly related to travel outside the region. In this case, the virus was likely acquired through local mosquitoes,” Dave Hylsky, PHD Staff Epidemiologist explained. “It’s imperative that people take extra precautions to protect themselves.”

To prevent mosquito breeding sites and avoid bites, PHD recommends taking the following steps:

- Maintain window and door screens to help keep mosquitoes out of buildings and homes.
- Remove standing water from buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes commonly lay eggs.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.
- Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear light colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other EPA approved product to exposed skin or clothing, always following the manufacturer's directions for use.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to humans, horses and other animals by infected mosquitoes after the mosquitoes have bitten infected birds, which are the primary hosts of the virus.

Most people bitten by infected mosquitoes may experience mild flu-like symptoms or no symptoms at all. Those whom develop symptoms may experience fever, nausea, headaches and muscle aches approximately 3 to 14 days after the insect bite. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis, encephalitis, or even death can occur. People older than 50 and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus. People with symptoms and recent mosquito bites are encouraged to visit their physician to discuss the necessity of testing.

For local updates and more information about West Nile virus, visit:  
<http://panhandlehealthdistrict.org>.

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