



City of Wichita Falls

Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District

1700 Third St. | Wichita Falls, TX 76301 | 940-761-7800 | www.health.wichitafallstx.gov

August 18, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Additional Mosquitoes in Wichita Falls Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Wichita Falls, Texas – The Texas Department of State Health Services laboratory has confirmed that a total of six pools of mosquitoes from Wichita Falls have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The mosquitoes were collected from traps placed in the city as part of the Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District's routine mosquito surveillance program. The mosquito pools that tested positive were collected throughout Wichita Falls. As such, it is imperative that citizens take precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites wherever they are.

West Nile Virus is transmitted to humans by some mosquitoes when they bite. Our local West Nile Virus vector mosquito is the *Culex quinquefasciatus*. Citizens can reduce the risk of infection by taking these steps to prevent bites:

1. **Dump/Drain:** The mosquitoes that spread West Nile Virus prefer stagnant water sources high in organic matter. You can help to eliminate breeding grounds around your home by cleaning up your grass clippings and other vegetative waste so it does not make it into water. Another common breeding ground is clogged gutters. If you have a swimming pool or livestock water tank, then be sure to routinely dump drain and wipe the sides to eliminate algae growth and mosquito eggs. Source elimination is the most effective action you can take to stop the spread of West Nile Virus. The Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District has some free mosquito larvicide available for citizens.
2. **Deet:** If you are going outside wear, an EPA approved insect repellent. Be sure to follow the label instructions on application and reapplication. Consult your pediatrician about what age it is appropriate to use an insect repellent on young children and what type they recommend. Remember to reapply before participating in extracurricular activities. Even if you are only going to be outside for a short period of time it is important to wear insect repellent.
3. **Dress:** Wear long sleeves and long pants if you are going to be outside especially if you are doing an activity that will stir up mosquitoes resting in the grass such as yard work or outdoor sports. The mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus are smaller than some of our nuisance mosquitoes and clothing can actually help to prevent some bites.
4. **Dusk/Dawn:** The mosquitoes that are known to carry West Nile Virus are generally most active at dusk and dawn. When you are able to you should limit your outdoor activities at those times; however, you should follow proper mosquito precautions any time you are outdoors no matter what time of day. If you want to take advantage of the cool evening air, you are encouraged to make sure that any windows you open are covered with an intact screen.



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The Health District's Environmental Health Division will continue its integrated pest management program for mosquito control. This includes continuing to test mosquitoes for West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, treating standing water, eliminating breeding areas and spraying for adult mosquitoes when weather conditions are favorable.

Only some mosquito species that are present in Wichita County have the capability of spreading diseases such as West Nile Virus, most are considered a nuisance. At this time, the Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District has not received any reports of a positive human case of West Nile Virus this season. Even so, if you experience flu like symptoms following a mosquito bite please contact your healthcare provider.

Please remember that mosquitoes will likely remain active and continue to breed until nighttime temperatures are consistently below 50°F this fall. Standing water is necessary for mosquitoes to complete their lifecycle and so increased rainfall can result in a boom in the mosquito population.

To request spraying for mosquitoes or to report an area of untreated standing water please contact the Health District's Vector Control unit at (940) 761-7890.

For more information about the Health District's mosquito abatement program, please call (940) 761-8896 or (940) 761-7822.

For questions about West Nile Virus visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm.

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