

**For Immediate Release**

**October 12, 2023**

## **Wichita Falls Mosquitoes Test Positive for St. Louis Encephalitis**

Wichita Falls, Texas- The Texas Department of State Health Services laboratory has confirmed that a pool of mosquitoes from Wichita Falls has tested positive for Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLE).

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 pool that tested positive was collected in mosquito zone 13, which is the North Fountain Park neighborhood; however, citizens are urged to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites no matter where they are.

Saint Louis Encephalitis can be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. However, anyone can reduce their risk of being infected by following the Four D's:

**Dump/Drain:** Be sure to dump or drain and wipe the sides of containers (such as pet bowls, rain barrels, children's toys, tarps, etc.) that hold water. As we transition seasons there are some additional considerations citizens should take:

a. When winterizing your swimming pool, consider keeping the water at operational level to allow the pump to circulate keeping the water clear and preventing mosquitoes from breeding. If you drain your swimming pool, make sure to check for puddles in the bottom after rain events.

b. Pull covers and tarps tight over swimming pools and boats so that there are no areas where water can pool and breed mosquitoes.

**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.

**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.

**Dusk/Dawn and all Day:** Mosquitoes are generally considered most active at dusk and dawn so you are able to 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.

We expect to continue to see mosquito activity until nighttime temperatures are consistently below 50°F. The Health District's Environmental Health Division will continue its integrated pest management program for mosquito control. This includes continuing to test mosquitoes for Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, treating standing water, eliminating breeding areas, and spraying for adult mosquitoes when weather conditions are favorable.

Citizens can look to see whether their area has been sprayed for mosquitoes recently or if it is in the queue by visiting our interactive mosquito spray map. Information on the map is updated every Tuesday. View the map here: [health.wichitafallstx.gov](http://health.wichitafallstx.gov)

Only some mosquito species that are present in Wichita County have the capability of spreading diseases such as Saint Louis Encephalitis, 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 Saint Louis Encephalitis this season. Even so, if you experience flu-like symptoms following a mosquito bite please contact your healthcare provider.

To request spraying for mosquitoes 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 visit: <https://tx-wichitafalls3.civicplus.com/375/Vector-Mosquito-Control>

For questions about Saint Louis Encephalitis visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <https://www.cdc.gov/sle/index.html>

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