



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH & WELFARE**

**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**DATE: August 3, 2017**

**Contact:**

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

**Kootenai County reports first human case of West Nile virus  
infection**

Idaho's first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) infection for 2017 has been confirmed in a Kootenai County resident. The resident, over the age of 50, is recovering from West Nile neuroinvasive disease.

This is the first human case of locally-acquired WNV in northern Idaho since the virus was first detected in Idaho in 2003.

A total of 11 Idaho counties have reported WNV activity in mosquitoes since the end of May. This case is the first person to be infected this season and the first indication of WNV activity in Kootenai County this season, bringing the total positive number of counties so far this year to 12.

"West Nile activity has ramped up significantly during the last few weeks, so people are strongly encouraged to fight the bite of mosquitoes to protect themselves and their families," says Dr. Leslie Tengelsen, state public health veterinarian. "This is a good warning for all of us to take protective measures, including wearing insect repellent and reducing mosquito habitat, such as standing water, around our gardens and homes."

Last year, nine human cases of West Nile infection were reported from 15 counties, with no deaths. However, it is difficult to predict the impact WNV will have from year-to-year. In 2006, Idaho led the nation for WNV illnesses with almost 1,000 infections that contributed to 23 deaths.

WNV is usually contracted from the bite of an infected mosquito; it is not spread from person-to-person through casual contact. Symptoms of infection often include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and sometimes

swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. In some cases the virus can cause severe illness, especially in people older than 50.

To reduce the likelihood of WNV infection, people are advised 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 EPA-approved insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing. Carefully follow instructions on the product label, especially for children.
- 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.
- Change bird baths, static decorative ponds, and animal water tanks weekly because they may provide a suitable mosquito habitat.

WNV does not usually affect domestic animals, 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 vaccinate their horses annually.

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