

DPHHS HAN ADVISORY



Cover Sheet

DATE: August 7, 2012

**SUBJECT: Preventing West Nile Virus (WNV)
Infections**

INSTRUCTIONS:

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE This HAN is intended for Public Health Department use only. Do not distribute. The information contained in this HAN message is about West Nile Virus in Montana and recommended actions for public awareness, including a press release template for local health department use.

**For LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENT reference only**

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

**DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov**

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Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919

Information Sheet

Date: August 7, 2012

Subject: Preventing West Nile virus infections

Information:

National: On August 1, 2012 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that current to the end of July 2012, 241 cases of West Nile virus disease, including 4 deaths, have been reported in the United States. The significance of this is:

- CDC reports that this is the highest number of cases reported by end of July in any year since 2004. (West Nile virus disease reports show association with time of year.)
- About 80 percent of the reported cases have been reported from: Texas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma

Montana:

- Two mosquito pools have tested positive for *Culex tarsalis* mosquitos infected with West Nile virus in Montana. The pools were collected in July 2012 from Sheridan and Phillips counties.
- Montana’s first case, non-invasive West Nile fever, of 2012 was reported from Custer Co. and is recovering.
- In Montana, there is a wide range in the number of cases reported each year.
 - Since 2007, number of reported cases of WNV neuroinvasive disease ranged from 0-38 cases. The number of reported cases of West Nile fever ranged from 0-164 cases.

Reported human cases of West Nile fever and neuroinvasive disease by year — Montana, 2007- 8/7/2012

Number of cases	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	8/2012
WNV neuroinvasive disease (meningitis/encephalitis)	38	0	0	0	1	0
West Nile Fever	164	5	6	0	0	1
Year total	202	5	6	0	1	1

Data source: Montana Infectious Disease Information System (MIDIS)

Recommended actions:

- Provide education on preventing mosquito bites and decreasing habitat for mosquitoes. DPHHS recommends using:
 - Posters, brochures - available from CDEpi by request
 - Use sample press release from DPHHS (attached)
 - Utilize available social media such as web-pages, Facebook, etc. for messaging on prevention.
- Encourage providers to test for WNV for persons with a clinically compatible presentation.
- Report suspect, probable and confirmed cases using the current disease-specific WNV reporting form.

Resources:

- [CDC WNV Fact Sheet Online](#)
- [CDC WNV Prevention : Training and Health Education Materials](#)

Repellents: note types of repellents, application information, and guidance for use on children

- [CDC Updated Information regarding Insect Repellents](#)
- [EPA Active Ingredients Found in Insect Repellents](#)

National data on WNV infections

- [CDC Statistics, Surveillance, and Control Archive](#)

Montana Health Officials Issue West Nile Virus Warning

Montana public health officials have reported the state's first case of West Nile virus (WNV) in a human, within weeks after finding the virus in mosquito samples. With an increase in reports nationally, health officials at the *[local health jurisdiction]* and Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) are cautioning people about the virus and how to minimize mosquito bites. This advice is timely: since 2002, when WNV was first reported in Montana, over 90 percent of cases have been reported in August and September.

As of August 1, 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 241 WNV cases, including 4 deaths. Montana's first case of the season has been reported from Custer County in Montana.

[quote:] "The best way to prevent West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites," said *[LHJ spokesperson]*. "The more time you spend outdoors recreating or working, the higher chance you have of being bitten by an infected mosquito."

WNV infection develops in about 3 to 14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. About 80% of persons infected with WNV experience no symptoms. Up to 20% of persons develop a mild illness, called West Nile fever, which usually lasts a few days. For some, West Nile fever can last for several weeks. Symptoms include headache, muscle aches, and low grade fever that resolves without any treatment.

About 1 in 150 infected persons develop dangerous brain infections such as encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of these diseases might include headache, rash, high fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, tremors, convulsions, coma and paralysis. Individuals who develop any of these symptoms should see their healthcare provider immediately.

Removing mosquito breeding areas and preventing mosquito bites are two ways to help to prevent being exposed to West Nile virus. *[Local health jurisdiction]* and DPHHS recommend these important prevention steps to take around your home and to protect yourself.

Eliminate Mosquito breeding areas:

- Empty standing water from flower pots, buckets, and barrels.
- Change the water in pet dishes and in bird baths daily.
- Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out.
- Empty children's wading pools and store in a position to prevent water accumulation when they aren't being used.

- If standing water cannot be removed, add mosquito-killing products labeled for elimination of mosquito larvae.

Prevent Mosquito bites:

- Make sure you have screen protection on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient and follow the directions on the package.
- Mosquito activity may increase at dusk and dawn. Use repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or stay in a mosquito protected area.

For more information go [*LHJ information*] or the DPHHS website at www.dphhs.mt.gov.

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