



**Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Healthier and Safer Grant County**

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| FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE<br>08/01/2008 | FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:<br>Theresa Fuller, Public Information Officer<br>509-766-7960 x24 |
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**- GRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT -  
Horse in Grant County has West Nile Virus**

Grant County Public Health Staff were notified this afternoon that a horse in the Moses Lake area has tested positive for West Nile Virus. The Washington State Department of Agriculture has released this information to the State Department of Health and the involved agencies are working to coordinate responses.

The Grant County Health District has confirmed that local Mosquito Control efforts have been active in the area and at this time there are no suspected or confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus in Grant County.

West Nile Virus (WNV) infection was first reported in the Western Hemisphere in 1999 during an outbreak in New York. Since then it has been spreading west; during 1999 through 2007, over 27,000 human WNV infections resulting in over 1000 deaths have been reported to local and state health departments in the United States.

In Washington State, the first locally acquired human infections were reported from Pierce and Clark counties. There were no locally acquired infections reported in Washington State in 2007. There have been no human cases reported in Washington State for 2008. Two mosquito pools near the Benton/Yakima County line have tested positive for WNV, and one other horse, in the Prosser area, has tested positive this year.

West Nile Virus can be serious or fatal. It is nearly always spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected after feeding on birds that carry the virus. There is no evidence that West Nile virus can be spread by direct contact with infected people or animals.

The risk of getting West Nile virus is very low, but anyone can become infected. People over 50 years of age have the highest risk of serious illness. Most people who are infected with West Nile virus will not get sick.

About 1 in 5 people infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. Even fewer, about 1 in 150 people infected, will have more severe symptoms.

If you have any of the following symptoms contact your health care provider. Severe symptoms may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis and coma.

There is no human vaccine for West Nile virus. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places mosquitoes live and breed around your home. Take these steps:

## **Avoid mosquito bites**

- Make sure windows and doors are “bug tight.” Repair or replace screens.
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are the most active.
- Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants and a hat when going into mosquito-infested areas, such as wetlands or woods.
- Use mosquito repellent when necessary. Read the label and carefully follow instructions. Take special care when using repellent on children.
- Mosquito repellents that contain the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus are the most effective for offering long-lasting protection against mosquito bites.

## **Don't give mosquitoes a home**

- Empty or throw away anything that holds standing water—bottles, cans, old tires, buckets, plastic covers and toys.
- Change water in your birdbaths, fountains, wading pools and animal troughs at least twice each week.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly; and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

The Grant County Health District is working in cooperation with Washington State Department of Health and Washington State Department of Agriculture and will provide additional updates as new information becomes available. For more information on West Nile Virus please visit [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html) or <http://www.bfhealth.org/wnv/>.

**Mosquito Problems Start At Home:** [www3.doh.wa.gov/here/materials/PDFs/24\\_MosqPstr\\_E01L.pdf](http://www3.doh.wa.gov/here/materials/PDFs/24_MosqPstr_E01L.pdf)

**Mosquito Repellent How to Use It Safely:** [www3.doh.wa.gov/here/materials/PDFs/24\\_WNVrepel\\_E07L.pdf](http://www3.doh.wa.gov/here/materials/PDFs/24_WNVrepel_E07L.pdf)