



NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Reports First West Nile Virus-Related Death in 2013

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced the state’s first West Nile virus-related death in 2013, according to West Nile Virus Program manager Michelle Feist. The individual was a woman who resided in the southeastern region of North Dakota and was older than 60 years of age. The woman did not have any underlying health conditions.

Today’s report brings the total number of cases in North Dakota this season to 16, including one death.

“This unfortunate death is a reminder of the seriousness of West Nile virus, especially to those older than 50 and those with other medical conditions,” said Feist. “North Dakotans should continue to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites to prevent West Nile virus.”

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes that may carry West Nile virus, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR 3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or permethrin when outdoors. Always follow the directions on the manufacturer’s label.
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- When possible, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts while outside.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

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The following is a summary of West Nile virus activity to date:

- Human cases – 16
 - Counties: Barnes (1), Burleigh (1), Cass (3), Grand Forks (2), Grant (1), McIntosh (1), Morton (1), Richland (4), Stark (1), Stutsman (1)
- Human deaths – 1
- WNV-positive dead birds – 3
 - Counties: Cass (1), Grand Forks (2)
- WNV-positive mosquito pools – 13
 - Counties: Cass (7), Grand Forks (6)

“This is the time of year we typically see the majority of our West Nile virus cases,” said Alicia Lepp, West Nile surveillance coordinator. “West Nile virus is active throughout the entire state, so regardless of the county you live in, it is important for all residents of North Dakota to take precautions against mosquito bites.”

For more information about West Nile virus, visit www.nd.gov/wnv or contact Alicia Lepp or Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

Note: The Department of Health’s Policy for Release of Information Concerning West Nile Virus Cases is included on the next page for your information.

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Policy for Release of Information Concerning West Nile Virus Cases

The North Dakota Department of Health strives to protect the identity and the privacy of people who are infected with diseases, including West Nile virus, while at the same time protecting the public's health. The following list identifies the information the Department of Health will release to the media and/or public concerning West Nile virus cases.

West Nile Virus Cases

- Number of cases per county
- Number of males and females statewide
- Number hospitalized statewide
- Number of cases by age group statewide
 - Younger than 10
 - Ages 10 to 19
 - Ages 20 to 29
 - Ages 30 to 39
 - Ages 40 to 49
 - Ages 50 to 59
 - Age 60 and older

West Nile Virus Deaths

- Region of the state in which the person resided
- Age group of the person
- The person's gender
- If the person had any underlying medical conditions

Information about a West Nile virus death will be released only after the department has consulted with the patient's health-care provider and after the provider has communicated with the patient's family. The local public health unit in which the person resided also will be notified prior to release of information.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Eberl, North Dakota Department of Health Office of Public Information, at 701.328.2372.

Communication policy developed 2002; updated 2006.