



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY  
**Health Department**

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**August 27, 2008**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MOSQUITOES POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY**

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**Helena --**The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department has confirmed that mosquitoes in Lewis and Clark County have tested positive for West Nile Virus. With the last days of summer here and the holiday weekend coming, please take precautions to prevent illness.

Statewide, West Nile Virus activity includes one reported human case of West Nile Fever in Richland County and three horses confirmed – two in Lake County and one in Jefferson County. There are four counties with positive mosquitoes: Cascade County, Blaine County, Sheridan County, and Lewis and Clark.

“Although most people will not be bitten by an infected mosquito, the presence of West Nile Virus serves as a reminder for people to take precautions when outdoors,” explained Laurel Riek, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department Environmental Health Specialist, “The key to disease prevention is to prevent the mosquito bite.”

So, as people head outdoors for the duration of the summer, here’s what they can do to protect themselves:

- Keep skin protected. Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants, socks, and hats when outdoors from dusk to dawn or during mid-day if in wooded areas or tall grass.
- Use an insect repellent such as DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or Picaridin (KBR 3023) to cover exposed skin or clothing:
  1. Do **not** apply to skin under clothing.
  2. Do not use repellent on infants two months or younger. Put them in a carrier or stroller and cover with mosquito netting.
  3. Never use repellent on cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
  4. Do not apply repellent to eyes or mouth, and apply sparingly around ears.
  5. For children, apply repellent first to your own hands then apply to child’s exposed skin. You may not want to put any repellent on child’s hands (Children put their hands in their mouths.).
  6. Do not spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas or around food.

*“To Improve and Protect the Health of all Lewis and Clark County Residents.”*

7. Always read and follow label instructions for reapplication. Directions are different for each repellent. Combination products of sunscreen and repellent are not recommended. Repellent is not water-soluble and needs different reapplication times than sunscreen. Read label directions.

- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water, or bathe.
- If you or your child develops a rash or reaction from an insect repellent, stop using the repellent. Wash the repellent off with mild soap and water. You may want to call local Poison Control Center, 1-800-222-1222, for further guidance. Keep repellent to be able to report label information to doctor or Poison Control Center.

A person bitten by an infected mosquito usually develops symptoms within two to 14 days from the time of the bite. About 20 percent of people who become infected from being bitten will have a moderate illness known as West Nile fever. The symptoms include fever, headache, and tiredness. Occasionally, an ill person will have a skin rash on the trunk of the body, eye pain, and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms usually last a few days, but some people have reported them up to several weeks.

About one percent of people who become infected develop a severe neurological form of infection with meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain or spinal cord) or encephalitis (infection of the brain). If a person develops symptoms such as a high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, and severe headache, Riek said it is very important to see a health care provider immediately. People with severe illness may need hospitalization and supportive care. People who are elderly whose immune systems are compromised are most often vulnerable to the severe form of illness. The remaining 80 percent of people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will not have any symptoms.

You can learn more about West Nile Virus by calling the local health department at 443-2584, and viewing the WNV fact sheet or select the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) WNV -Link at [www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/health](http://www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/health).

*The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.*

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