



For Immediate Release: September 17, 2018

Contact: Gary Sky, Public Information Officer, 720-200-1529

Tri-County Health Department Reports First Three Cases of West Nile Virus This Year, in Adams and Arapahoe Counties

Forty-seven cases have been reported statewide so far this year

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) has confirmed West Nile (WNV) virus infection in three residents, one in Adams and two in Arapahoe Counties. Two of the three residents have been hospitalized. These are the first human WNV infections reported in the TCHD jurisdiction of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties this year. Most people get WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reports that as of September 14, there have been 47 human cases of WNV statewide this year, with one death reported. Historically, the vast majority of human cases are reported in August and September. Cases of human WNV have been reported from Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Delta, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Logan, Mesa, Montrose, Otero, San Miguel, Washington, and Weld counties.

“Tri-County Health Department is urging people to protect themselves from mosquito bites and to eliminate mosquito breeding areas around their home,” states John M. Douglas, Jr. MD, Executive Director of TCHD. “All Colorado residents should take precautions since West Nile virus is preventable by protecting yourself against mosquito bites. You can do this by avoiding outdoor exposure when mosquitoes are active, wearing protective clothing, and applying insect repellent whenever you are outdoors—whether in the backwoods or in your own back yard.”

Prevention Tips

- Eliminate standing water in rain gutters, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, toys, or any other container where mosquitoes can breed.
- Keep mosquitoes away from exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks
- Use EPA-registered mosquito repellents that contain one of the following active ingredients: DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, Oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone as directed while outdoors
- Mosquito-proof your home by repairing screens on windows and doors.
- Stay inside at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active or take steps to avoid mosquito bites if outside

Most people who are infected with WNV will not become ill. About 1 in 5 people who are infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of WNV disease recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Serious symptoms in a few people. About 1 in 150 people who are infected develop a severe illness affecting the central nervous system such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord).

- Symptoms of severe illness include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.
- Severe illness can occur in people of any age; however, people over 60 years of age are at greater risk. People with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and people who have received organ transplants, are also at greater risk.
- Recovery from severe illness might take several weeks or months. Some effects to the central nervous system might be permanent.
- About 1 out of 10 people who develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system die.

See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms described above.

###

Tri-County Health Department serves over 1.5 million people in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties. It provides over 60 programs and services including birth certificates, immunizations, food/WIC, restaurant inspections, family planning, STI/HIV Testing and infectious disease investigations. For more information, visit www.tchd.org Twitter @TCHDHealth or Facebook @cotchd.