



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS DEATH REPORTED IN WELD COUNTY IN 2023

WELD COUNTY, CO — The Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment (WCDPHE) has confirmed the first death of a Weld County resident due to West Nile Virus (WNV), in 2023. The 53-year-old resident, who had been hospitalized, died from neuroinvasive WNV.

WNV symptoms can appear two-14 days after an infection. Although 80% of infected people do not develop symptoms, for some, initial symptoms can include fever plus headache, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, joint pain, weakness, and a rash. If a person develops symptoms after being bitten by mosquitoes, they should see a health care professional immediately.

To date, eight investigations of WNV in Weld County residents have been conducted. The residents who tested positive are not just from one area, rather they represent a wide geographical area. WNV is endemic in Colorado — meaning you can get the virus any place that infected mosquitoes live and breed. As the mosquito season continues, health department investigators anticipate increased human infections.

Less than 1% of individuals infected with WNV develop a serious, sometimes fatal, neuroinvasive illness, however, there are no medications to treat, or vaccines to prevent, WNV infection. As Weld County continues to see high numbers of Culex mosquitos, those that more easily transmit WNV, health officials remind residents to follow the four "D's" to prevent mosquito bites and reduce your risk of WNV:

DRAIN standing water around your house weekly. Remember to drain water from tires, cans, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, toys, and puddles.

DUSK and **DAWN** are when culex mosquitoes are most active. Limit outdoor activities and take precautions to prevent mosquito bites during these times.

DEET is an effective ingredient to look for in insect repellents. Other repellents containing picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or para-menthane-diol are also effective against mosquitoes. Always follow the product label instructions carefully.

DRESS in long sleeves and pants, and a hat, in areas where mosquitoes are active.

For more information about WNV, go to www.weld.gov/go/zoonosis.

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