



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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### NEWS RELEASE

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## WELD COUNTY INVESTIGATES FIRST WEST NILE CASE OF SEASON

**WELD COUNTY, CO** — The Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment (WCDPHE) is investigating a potential case of West Nile virus (WNV) in a Weld County resident- the first of the 2023 mosquito season.

This year, Culex mosquitoes, which transmit WNV, are more prevalent in Weld County than in previous years. During the week of July 16, 2023, the Culex count was ten times higher when compared to the 5-year average. The increasing hot weather and afternoon thundershowers have created favorable conditions for the Culex mosquito.

The Health Department continues to take proactive measures to monitor for WNV. A health department contractor monitors mosquito traps on a weekly basis in three sentinel zones of Weld County one night each week between June and August. The three zones include the Greeley, Evans, Kersey, LaSalle area (Zone 1); the Johnstown, Milliken, and Platteville area (Zone 2); and the Firestone, Dacono, and Fort Lupton area (Zone 3). Mosquitoes trapped in all 3 zones have tested positive for WNV this year. The public should be vigilant as WNV has a permanent summer presence in Colorado.

West Nile virus symptoms can appear three to 14 days after infection. Initial symptoms can include fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, muscle aches and weakness, and rash, but most infected people don't show any symptoms. If a person develops symptoms, they should see a health care professional immediately. There are no medications to treat or vaccines to prevent WNV infection. Less than 1% of infected people develop a serious, sometimes fatal, neuroinvasive illness. Health officials recommend following the four "D's" to prevent mosquito bites:

**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, pants, and a hat in areas where mosquitoes are active.

For more information about preventing mosquito bites and WNV, go to <https://www.weld.gov/go/zoonosis>.

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