



701 Olson Drive, Suite 101, Papillion, NE 68046 | 402-339-4334 | FAX 402-339-4235

June 10, 2019

Contact: Jenny Steventon, Assistant Health Director and Environmental Health Coordinator, 402-339-4334

**Sarpy/Cass Health Department is monitoring for West Nile Virus. Protect yourself and take precautions this summer.**

Mosquitoes are responsible for causing diseases in millions of people around the world each year. There are at least 50 mosquito species present in Nebraska, however, only a few are known to transmit disease. The Sarpy/Cass Health Department monitors the presence of mosquitoes in our communities in order to prevent and control mosquito-borne diseases. The Health Department's mosquito surveillance program involves larval monitoring, adult mosquito trapping, and dead bird collection.

Adult mosquitoes are collected from various sites around Sarpy and Cass County in order to monitor changes in mosquito populations, identify which mosquito species are present, and detect mosquito-borne diseases. Laboratory personnel sort, identify, and test each mosquito for West Nile Virus. Results are communicated with local cities to assist with mosquito management programs.

The collection of dead birds for West Nile Virus testing began on June 1. Jenny Steventon, Assistant Health Director and Environmental Health Specialist, said the Health Department is collecting only corvids such as blue jays, crows, and magpies this year. "If you find one of these birds that has been dead for less than 24 hours, shows no visible sign of injury, and has not begun to decompose, call the Health Department at 402-339-4334. Arrangements will be made to submit the bird for testing," Steventon said.

According to the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services, there were 242 human cases of West Nile Virus and 46 blood donor cases in Nebraska in 2018. One bird and two equines also tested positive for the virus in Nebraska last year.

Steventon offers these easy steps to protect yourself from mosquito bites: "Wear appropriate attire such as shoes, socks, long-sleeved shirts and pants while outdoors during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, wear an EPA-approved insect repellent, and remove standing water where mosquitoes breed." Mosquitoes can lay eggs in water that has been left stagnant for as little as 4 days. Frequently change water in birdbaths and empty cans, planters, clogged gutters, and other containers that can hold water.

For more information about West Nile Virus, visit the Health Department's website at [www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org](http://www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org). The Health Department is offering free insect repellent wipes to residents of Sarpy and Cass County. Limited quantities are available at the Health Department's office in Papillion at 701 Olson Drive, Suite 101.

###