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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile virus cases on the rise in Sarpy and Cass Counties and protection is key

West Nile virus (WNV) activity in Sarpy and Cass Counties has notably increased this year. Typically, the Sarpy/Cass Health Department sees an average of four WNV cases per year. However, this week six cases of WNV were reported to the Department, bringing this seasons total to 14 cases.

“The number of West Nile virus cases are up this year and it is important for individuals to know how to protect themselves from getting sick and the best way to do that is to avoid mosquito bites,” said Health Director Sarah Schram.

West Nile virus is a disease that is transmitted to people through the bite of infected mosquitoes. In Nebraska, most infections occur from June through September. The Health Department offers a few tips to protect yourself from WNV and all mosquito-borne diseases:

- Limit outdoor activity during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Reduce the amount of exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants and cover infant strollers, cribs, and baby carriers with nets.
- Cover exposed skin with an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning, if you have it.
- Empty standing water from items outside your home such as flowerpots, buckets, and kiddie pools.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms; however, symptoms can include headache, fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, and rash.

Anyone with questions should contact their primary health care provider or visit www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org for more information.

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