

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department has begun the 2010 West Nile Virus education campaign with the theme, "Tee it up against West Nile Virus."

Educational materials were distributed to area golf courses in the eight county health district, which includes Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow.

"We will be visiting the area golf courses, to raise awareness about protecting yourself against West Nile Virus," said Shane Smith, Environmental Health Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

Trapping for mosquitoes has moved into full swing for the health department. Travis Wheeler of Imperial began trapping in the Chase County area June 7. Wheeler collects mosquitoes from six traps biweekly and sends them to the State.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus can vary, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

- Most people, approximately 80 percent or four out of five who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.
- Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.
- A few people, about one in 150 people will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.

To avoid mosquito bites, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

recommends:

- Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;
- Wearing long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks;
- Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active; and
- Eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

“It is important to take the necessary precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes,” said Beverly Powers, Surveillance Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “The West Nile Virus is not limited to the locations which have positive tested pools of mosquitoes.”

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at <http://www.swhealthdept.com/health.htm> or call 308-345-4223 for more information or edu