

A Hamilton County man in his 70s tested positive for West Nile Virus according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. He was hospitalized and released. It's the first positive human case seen so far this season.

"West Nile activity is increasing across the state. If you haven't been taking precautions to avoid mosquito bites, start now," said Dr. Joann Schaefer, the state's Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS.

- Use mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.
- Dress in long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when you're outside.
- Dusk and dawn are times when mosquitoes are most active. Limit outdoor activities.
- Drain standing water around your home. Standing water and warmth breeds mosquitoes.

More counties are seeing infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes in Adams, Douglas, Hall, Madison, Scottsbluff, Sheridan and Richardson counties tested positive for West Nile Virus and so have birds in Madison and Phelps counties according to DHHS.

West Nile is transmitted to people through the bite of a mosquito that picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people who are infected have no symptoms or only mild flu-like symptoms. About one out of 150 people infected with West Nile Virus become severely ill. However, people over 50 and those with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable to the disease and are more likely to experience serious consequences.

West Nile fever includes flu-like symptoms such as fever and muscle weakness. Symptoms of the more serious West Nile encephalitis include inflammation of the brain, disorientation, convulsions and paralysis.

DHHS tests mosquitoes and birds to determine the level of virus in the state. With the assistance of local health departments, DHHS is collecting and testing dead birds. To report dead birds, contact your local health department. To find your department, go to http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/wnv_contacts.aspx.

West Nile case updates and more information can be found on the DHHS website at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/wnv.aspx>.