



News Release

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*Always working for a
safer and healthier
community.*

**2008 West Nile virus
activity in Washington**
Last year, 24 birds, 41
horses, and 3 people
tested positive for West
Nile virus in Washington.

West Nile Virus Websites:

Benton-Franklin Health
District
www.bfhd.wa.gov/wnv

Washington Department
of Health
www.doh.wa.gov/wnv

Centers for Disease
Control
www.cdc.gov/westnile

Local Mosquito Control Websites:

Benton County
www.mosquitocontrol.org

Franklin County
www.fcncd.org

WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN BENTON COUNTY

Community surveillance detects a West Nile Virus warning sign in West Richland

A mosquito pool collected in West Richland by the Benton County Mosquito Control District was confirmed positive for West Nile virus today and is the first positive finding in Benton County this year. According to Susan Shelton with the Benton-Franklin Health District, "This report of West Nile virus activity in local mosquitoes the first week of summer is a timely reminder that each of us needs to take steps to prevent mosquito bites and a warning that we will likely have a long season to prevent illness from the virus this year."

The best way to prevent illness from West Nile virus is to prevent exposure to mosquitoes.

Protection measures include:

- Drain sources of standing water around your home each week so mosquitoes don't have a place to lay their eggs.
- Dress with long sleeves, pants, and a hat when outdoors and mosquitoes are present.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Windows and doors without screens should be kept shut, especially at night.
- Wear an insect repellent when mosquitoes are around, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Recommended repellents include **DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus**. Be sure to read and follow the label directions.

Residents may learn more about West Nile virus and its activity in the northwest through the health district's West Nile website at www.bfhd.wa.gov/wnv. Residents may also report dead crows, ravens, magpies, and raptors to the health district for possible testing of West Nile virus at the Washington State Department of Health website www.doh.wa.gov/wnv.

Symptoms of West Nile virus

Most people (about 80 percent) infected with West Nile virus will not have any symptoms. Up to 20 percent of people may have symptoms such as fever, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Symptoms may last for a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.

About 1 in 150 people infected with WNV may develop severe illness. Severe symptoms include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent. Death may also occur from infection. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop severe symptoms, but people of all ages can develop serious illness.