



News Release

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BENTON-FRANKLIN
HEALTH DISTRICT
www.bfhd.wa.gov

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*Always working for a
safer and healthier
community.*

**2009 West Nile virus
activity in Washington**
So far, 1 bird, 0 horses,
0 people, and 63
mosquito pools have
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.fcmcd.org

LOCAL HAWK TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Community surveillance detects another warning sign

The Benton-Franklin Health District received confirmation that a red-tailed hawk found in the Prosser area has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). This is the first confirmed WNV positive bird in the state this year. "We consider this another important warning sign that the virus is active in our area," said Susan Shelton with the District. "We are increasing our efforts to remind residents to take steps to avoid mosquito bites and to help control mosquito populations in our community. Preventing West Nile virus is a community effort."

The Benton-Franklin Health District maintains a website (www.bfhd.wa.gov/wnv) with maps to help residents track West Nile virus activity in the region. West Nile virus has also been found in eastern Oregon and southern Idaho this summer. New this year, residents may view the mapping and status of dead birds reported to the Health District on the website.

The best way to prevent West Nile infection is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Personal precaution measures include:

- Drain sources of standing water around your home.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Windows and doors without screens should be kept shut, especially at night.
- Dress with long sleeves, pants, and a hat when mosquitoes are present.
- When outside, wear an approved insect repellent. Approved mosquito repellents include DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Be sure to read and follow the label directions.

West Nile virus

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people with the virus have no symptoms of illness, but some may become ill 3-14 days after the mosquito bite. In the United States, most human cases appear in August and September. There is no human vaccine or cure for the virus.

An estimated two people out of ten infected with the virus will have symptoms of illness. Illness from West Nile is usually mild and includes fever, head and body aches, and possibly a rash. Serious illness that involves the nervous system, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are also possible. Although anyone may have severe illness, people over 50 years old usually have the highest risk.

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