



News Release

For immediate release: July 8, 2015

(15-122)

Contacts: [Marqise Allen](#), Communications Office
[Sharon Moysiuk](#), Communications Office

360-236-4072

360-236-4074

West Nile virus infection confirmed in Washington resident

The first in-state acquired case in 2015 identified this week

OLYMPIA — A Benton County woman is the first Washington resident known to be infected with West Nile virus in the state this year. The woman in her 50's was likely exposed near her home.

Most in-state acquired human and animal cases are exposed in south-central Washington, but the mosquito species that transmit the virus are found throughout the state. Nationally, [six states have reported human West Nile virus infections](#) this year. Tests have also confirmed the virus in Washington mosquito samples so far this season from Franklin, Yakima and Grant counties.

Regardless of where you are, avoiding mosquito bites is the best way to prevent getting infected. Health officials recommend a few simple precautions to reduce your chances of getting mosquito bites, such as staying indoors around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active, using insect repellent when spending time outdoors, and wearing long sleeves and pants when mosquitoes are active. Be sure that door and window screens are in good condition so mosquitoes cannot get indoors. Reducing mosquito habitat around the home by dumping standing or stagnant water from old buckets, cans, flower pots, or old tires, and changing water in birdbaths, pet dishes, and water troughs at least twice a week are also effective ways to reduce the chances of being bitten.

Most people infected with West Nile virus won't get sick. However, about one in five people who are infected with the virus will develop a fever and other symptoms such as a headache or body aches. West Nile virus infection can be very serious, resulting in encephalitis, meningitis, or other complications; it can be fatal. People with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease are at greater risk for serious illness. Anyone with severe symptoms should contact a health care provider.

— More —

West Nile virus

July 8, 2015

Page 2

Last year, 12 human cases of West Nile virus were reported in Washington; 10 of these infections were acquired in-state and two were travel-related. Washington's most active year for West Nile virus was 2009 with 38 human cases, 95 animal cases (including birds), and 364 positive mosquito samples.

It's impossible to predict what each year may bring, so it's important to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and protect yourself from West Nile virus. More [information about West Nile virus in Washington](#) can be found online.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###