



Media Release

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West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitoes Detected in Yakima County

Yakima, WA- The Yakima Health District received a report from Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories of a mosquito sample that tested positive for West Nile virus. This is the first detection of West Nile virus in a mosquito sample from Washington state this year. The sample was collected from Hisey Park in Granger, WA.

In 2024, ten mosquito samples collected from Yakima County tested positive for West Nile virus. The last reported human case of West Nile virus in Yakima County was in 2021. While so far this year, there have been no human, bird, horse, or other animal cases of West Nile virus reported in Washington, it is crucial to follow preventative measures to avoid West Nile virus.

How to Protect Yourself from West Nile Virus

West Nile virus is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. To prevent West Nile virus, avoid being bitten by mosquitoes:

- If possible, **stay indoors at dawn and dusk**, when mosquitoes are most active.
- **Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellant** when spending time in areas with mosquitoes. Follow the directions on the label.
- **Wear long sleeves and pants and a hat** when going into areas with mosquitoes. Treat clothing and gear with permethrin to kill or repel mosquitos.
- **Keep mosquitoes out of your home** by using tight-fitting screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- **Remove standing water** where mosquitoes can lay eggs. This includes buckets, rain gutters, bird baths, old tires, and anything else that holds water. Empty, cover, turn over, or throw out these items at least twice a week.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus

Most people – 8 out of 10 – infected with West Nile virus do not develop any symptoms. For those who do, symptoms may include **fever** with:

- Headache
- Body aches
- Joint pains
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Skin rash

In some cases, West Nile virus can be serious. About 1 in 150 people who are infected develop a severe illness affecting the central nervous system that results in encephalitis or meningitis. People over the age of 60 or people with certain conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease, have a greater risk for severe illness.

If individuals experience symptoms of West Nile virus, they should contact their healthcare provider.

There is **no West Nile vaccine for people**, so the best way to stay safe is to prevent mosquito bites and reduce mosquito habitats around your home. There is a vaccine for horses to prevent against West Nile virus infection; speak with your veterinarian to learn more.

Quotes

“Now that West Nile virus has been detected in local mosquitoes, it’s important that everyone take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites. Wearing insect repellent, covering exposed skin, and eliminating standing water around your home are simple but effective ways to reduce the risk of infection.” -Melissa Sixberry, Director of Disease Control, Yakima Health District

“As part of our partnership with the University of Washington, we host a public health intern each summer to support West Nile virus surveillance in Yakima County. The intern plays a key role in trapping and collecting mosquito samples for testing, which helps us monitor mosquito activity and detect the presence of West Nile virus throughout the county.” -Kait Wolterstorff, Environmental Health Program Manager, Yakima Health District

Additional Information

[West Nile Virus | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Historical West Nile Virus Activity | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Mosquitoes | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[West Nile Virus | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Preventing West Nile Virus | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[West Nile Virus: Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment](#)

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