



Media Release

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Locally-Acquired Human West Nile Virus Case in Yakima County

Yakima, WA- The Yakima Health District is reporting a case of West Nile virus (WNV) disease in a resident of Yakima County. The person was likely exposed to mosquitoes in Yakima County and is the first case of human West Nile virus reported from Yakima County and Washington State this year. This follows a report of a case of West Nile virus disease in a horse from Yakima County announced by [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) earlier this week.

West Nile virus is almost always spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Anyone living in or visiting an area where West Nile virus is present in mosquitoes can get infected. Yakima Health District is urging the public to take preventative measures against diseases carried by mosquitoes, like West Nile virus. The best protection measures include mosquito bite prevention and mosquito habitat reduction:

- 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 anything that holds standing water. If emptying is not possible, cover water sources or change water at least twice per 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 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.

Individuals who experience symptoms of West Nile virus should contact their healthcare provider.

Cases of WNV are reported most years in Washington, particularly in areas with very warm summer temperatures. Disease due to WNV occurs during mosquito season in Washington state, which starts in the summer and continues through the early fall. 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 through the end of mosquito season.

There is a vaccine for horses to prevent against West Nile virus infection; speak with your veterinarian to learn more.

Yakima Health District continues to partner with Washington State Department of Health, Yakima Mosquito Control District, and Benton County Mosquito Control District in detecting the presence of West Nile virus in the county and monitoring mosquito activity throughout the season.

Individuals can find up-to-date data on West Nile virus detections on [Washington State Department of Health's West Nile Virus Data webpage](#).

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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