



Canyon County Mosquito Abatement District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Mosquito Day Reminds us of the Importance of Protecting Ourselves from Mosquitoes and the Diseases They Carry

World Mosquito Day is observed annually on August 20th to commemorate Sir Ronald Ross's 1897 discovery that female *Anopheles* mosquitoes transmitted Malaria between humans. This discovery fundamentally changed our understanding of disease transmission and forever linked mosquito control operations with public health.

Lessons learned in the wake of this discovery are still relevant today in Canyon County, although we are dealing with West Nile virus instead of Malaria. "Artificial containers, water troughs and other small back yard larval sites continue to be the most difficult for us to control effectively," said Jim Lunders, Director of Canyon County Mosquito Abatement District. Just as it was in Ross's Day "we need the public's help in eliminating as many of these sites as possible to limit the spread of mosquito borne diseases".

Lunders explained that the Canyon County Mosquito Abatement District routinely sets gravid traps and dry ice baited EVS traps at over 100 locations throughout Canyon County to monitor adult mosquito populations and the presence of vector borne diseases. To date, the District has tested over 2100 mosquito pools for West Nile virus. Despite relatively low mosquito numbers the percentage of those mosquitoes which are infected has dramatically increased and positive mosquito pools are being detected throughout the county. As of this week 22 total positive pools have been detected from 19 different locations. The District has performed increased larval and adult control operations in these areas in response to the increased public health threat.

Human and horse infections typically begin to be reported in August with Southwest District Health reporting a human case earlier this week. Symptoms of West Nile virus vary depending on the severity of the disease and are like many other viral infections. "Unfortunately, neither humans or horses can be conclusively diagnosed with West Nile virus without being tested," said Lunders, "if a physician or veterinarian suspects a patient has West Nile virus a blood test should be performed to confirm their diagnosis." He offered the following suggestions to reduce the risk of exposure to West Nile virus:

- Eliminate or treat all sources of standing water that can be a breeding ground for biting mosquitoes, such as:
 - flooded fields
 - birdbaths
 - wading & swimming pools not in use
 - clogged gutters
 - old tires

If it holds water for 7 days, it can produce mosquitoes.

- Wear repellents while outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when in mosquito-infested areas.
- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, Picaridin or 2-undecanone, making sure to follow the directions on the container.
- Make sure all screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.
- Vaccinate horses for WNV, WEE, and other diseases.
- Use EPA registered residual insect sprays on horses, making sure to follow the directions on the container.
- Have your livestock watering troughs stocked with mosquitofish for free by submitting a service request to CCMAD.
- Notify the District at 208-461-8633 if you have a site that is too large to be eliminated so it can be properly treated.

Additional information on mosquitoes and the diseases they carry can be found at:

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/diseases-conditions/west-nile-virus>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>

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