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First Human West Nile Virus Cases Reported in Kansas This Year Two Johnson County residents infected, four regions remain at high risk

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is reporting two cases of neuroinvasive West Nile virus (WNV) disease in individuals who reside in Johnson County. Four regions of the state remain under a high-risk warning for WNV, including north central, south central, northwest, and southwest Kansas. Northeast and southeast regions are at moderate risk for WNV infections.

WNV can be spread to people through mosquito bites, but it is not spread from person to person. About one in five people who are infected develop a fever and other symptoms. Roughly one out of 150 infected people develop the more severe version of the disease, neuroinvasive disease, which includes swelling of the brain or brain tissue and, in some cases, death. There are no vaccines or medications to treat WNV. People who have had WNV before are considered immune.

“Although for most people West Nile virus may not cause a great deal of concern, we encourage residents, especially our vulnerable populations, to take steps to prevent infection because of the potential for complications,” said Dr. Greg Lakin, Chief Medical Officer, KDHE.

KDHE recommends you know your risk of WNV and take action to prevent mosquito bites and protect yourself against WNV:

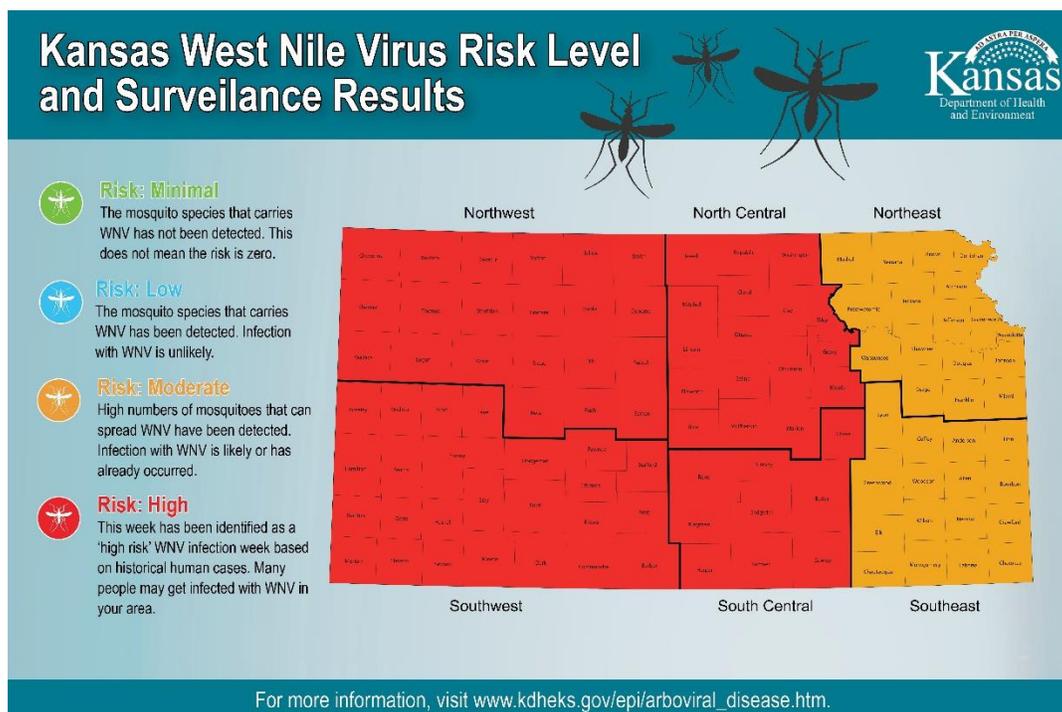
- Visit the KDHE WNV website weekly to learn about the current WNV risk level;
http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/arboviral_disease.htm

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient on skin and clothing, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- The elderly or those with a weakened immune system should consider limiting their exposure outside during dusk and dawn when the *Culex* species mosquitos are most active.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.
- Horses can also be infected with WNV. Talk with your veterinarian about vaccinating your horse to protect them against WNV.

Most WNV infections occur in the late summer and early fall. As of July 24, 39 cases of human WNV have been reported nationally. There have been more than 600 cases of the most severe form of WNV and 30 deaths in Kansas from 1999-2017. Symptoms of WNV disease include fever, headache, weakness, muscle pain, arthritis-like pain, gastrointestinal symptoms, and rash typically developing two to 14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito. People who are concerned about symptoms should speak with their physicians.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides this web page with additional information about West Nile virus and preventing mosquito bites <http://www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes/>. WNV case counts are updated each Tuesday on the following website: http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/case_reports_by_county.htm

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