



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT
Mary Howell
Public Information Officer
239-5288

Tuesday, June 27, 2007

Have a Safe Fourth of July by Protecting Yourself

Pocatello – With the summer in swing and the Fourth of July around the corner comes a barely seen, but definitely felt, pest. If you're planning on being outside with family and friends, you can be sure the mosquitoes will be biting. And they have the potential to carry serious illnesses, including West Nile virus.

Southeastern District Health Department (SDHD) has issued warnings every year since 2001 about West Nile virus in order to educate the public about West Nile virus and how to protect against contracting the illness. Because Southeastern Idaho has had a mostly hot and dry early summer season, and that's when the mosquitoes proliferate, SDHD would like to remind the public of precautions to take to help reduce the risk of mosquito bites.

Practice the "Six D's" of protection:

- DRAIN any standing water that may produce mosquitoes.
- DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid. These are times when mosquitoes are most active.
- DRESS appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors.
- DEFEND yourself against mosquitoes by using an effective repellent, such as DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Make sure you follow label directions!
- DOOR and window screens should be in good condition. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

Most human infections of West Nile virus are mild or have no symptoms. Approximately 20% of those infected develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

-more-

Symptoms of WNV often include: fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. In rare cases, the virus can lead to serious illness, especially in people over the age of 50. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, and you think you have been exposed to mosquitoes, contact your physician.

For more information about West Nile virus, contact Jeff Doerr, Epidemiologist, at 478-6321 or visit the SDHD's website at www.sdhdidaho.org. You can also obtain more information about the disease from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov/westnile, or www.fightthebite.net.

For information about this and many other events SDHD is offering, please see our Calendar of Events page at www.sdhdidaho.org.