



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY  
**Health Department**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **West Nile Virus Detected in Lewis & Clark County Mosquitoes**

West Nile virus has been detected in mosquitoes in Lewis and Clark County, prompting local health officials to remind people to prevent mosquito bites.

So far, no cases of the virus have been confirmed in people in Montana, but WNV has been found in mosquitoes in seven other counties: Hill, Cascade, Blaine, Prairie, Sheridan, Phillips, and Teton.

“Labor Day weekend is coming up, and we know people are likely to be outside where they’re at greater risk of being bitten by mosquitoes,” said Laurel Riek, Environmental Health Specialist for Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department. “The virus is transmitted to people by mosquitoes, so the best way to prevent it is to prevent mosquito bites.”

The health department has these recommendations:

- Check your window and door screens and repair as needed to make sure they keep mosquitoes outside.
- Use insect repellent.
- Wear long, loose, light-colored clothing or stay in a mosquito-protected area at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

Most people who get WNV experience no symptoms. About 20 percent develop a mild illness, called West Nile fever, which usually lasts a few days. For some, West Nile fever can last for several weeks. Symptoms include headache, muscle aches, and a low-grade fever that goes away on its own.

About 1 in 150 people who are infected develop dangerous brain infections like encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of these diseases can include headache, rash, high fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, tremors, convulsions, coma, and paralysis. Anyone with these symptoms should see a health-care provider immediately.

Removing mosquito breeding areas is another way to help to prevent the spread of West Nile virus. The health department recommends that you:

- Empty standing water from flower pots, buckets, and barrels.
- Change the water in birdbaths and clean them with a garden hose weekly.
- Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out.
- Store tarps and children’s wading pools so that water can’t accumulate in them when they’re not being used.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html)