## **NEWS RELEASE**



Office of Communications Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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Mosquito surveillance reveals West Nile virus in three Colorado counties - No human cases reported

DENVER —The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment announced today that mosquito samples in Delta, Larimer and Weld counties have tested positive for West Nile virus. No cases of human illness have been reported.

Department officials advise people to take precautions against West Nile virus, such as wearing insect repellent, to avoid mosquito bites when outdoors.

Elisabeth Lawaczeck, state public health veterinarian, explained, "Although we can't predict how severe the West Nile virus season will be, we do know we will see virus activity statewide."

West Nile Virus is carried by certain infected birds and transmitted to people by bites from female Culex mosquitoes that have fed on infected birds.

"The good news is that West Nile virus is preventable," Lawaczeck said, "and now is the time to take precautions against the disease."

In addition to wearing insect repellant, additional precautions against West Nile virus include the following "five Ds":

• **Drain** standing water in your yard weekly, since that's where mosquitoes lay eggs. Drain tires, cans, flower pots, clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, toys and puddles.

- **Dusk** and **dawn** are when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active, so limit outdoor activities or take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.
- **DEET** is an effective ingredient to look for in insect repellents. Always follow label instructions carefully.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or when in areas where mosquitoes are active.

Lawaczeck said, "Each season, this virus will be present and circulating around the state. The severity of the season will depend on the weather and other natural factors."

Studies show that cool, wet weather in early spring followed by very hot temperatures throughout the summer could result in more mosquito activity.