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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS IN SEDGWICK COUNTY

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – Sedgwick County Health Department reports four cases of West Nile virus infection in adult residents of the county. These are Sedgwick County’s first reported cases in 2016. In 2015, Sedgwick County reported a total of four cases of West Nile virus infection.

Mosquito trapping in Sedgwick County confirms the presence of *Culex* species of mosquitoes, the main carrier of West Nile virus. Mosquito trap results can be found on the Sedgwick County (www.sedgwickcounty.org) and KDHE (www.kdheks.gov) websites. West Nile virus is not contagious person to person. The *Culex* species of mosquitoes are known to transmit West Nile virus but are not known to transmit Zika virus.

Most people with West Nile virus infection do not have any symptoms. About 20 percent of people infected experience mild symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea and vomiting. Less than 1 percent of people develop severe illness that may require hospitalization. Severe symptoms include neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, muscle weakness, numbness, paralysis and even coma or death. If you develop severe symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.

You can help prevent the spread of West Nile virus and other diseases spread by mosquitoes and ticks by following the three Ds: drain, dress and DEET.

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Drain

Mosquito populations are mostly home grown, so the Sedgwick County Health Department is asking (human) residents to help stop the spread of these diseases by eliminating standing water, which is where mosquitoes breed. Rain water, sprinklers and the like can create pools of standing water in places like bird baths, gutters, empty pots, pet dishes, on top of tarps and in tire swings. If these items don't drain or the water doesn't evaporate quickly, empty the water or replace it every couple of days. If standing water cannot be drained, apply dunks that can be purchased at area garden stores.

Dress

Cover your skin with clothing when you are outdoors, especially during the dawn and dusk hours; wear long sleeves, pants, socks and shoes that cover your feet.

DEET

Use insect repellent that contains DEET. Follow label instructions and avoid over-application.

The City of Wichita Public Works and Utilities and the Sedgwick County Health Department are collaborating to combat mosquitoes by applying dunks on targeted areas of public land. City of Wichita Neighborhood Inspectors are applying dunks to vacant and abandoned swimming pools and distributing information to area neighbors on ways to prevent mosquitoes.

More information about West Nile virus can be found on the Sedgwick County website at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

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