

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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Gila County West Nile Virus Information

Gila County has had some recent indications of West Nile Virus activity in both Payson and Globe. On August 12th, 2005, The Arizona Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has reported that two squirrels collected in the Payson area, submitted by the Gila County Health Department were found to be positive for West Nile Virus. In the Globe – Miami area, a sample of mosquitoes collected on the 9th of August, 2005, were sent to the State Laboratory for analysis, this sample tested positive for WNV. This year there have been no human cases of West Nile Virus in Gila County. With the current laboratory confirmed samples and recent rains, residents are encouraged to remain vigilant in taking a few common sense precautions and keeping mosquito breeding sites clear.

West Nile Virus infection is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the virus while feeding on infected birds. Dead bird surveillance remains an important tool in monitoring for WNV in the community. Residents are encouraged to report any dead birds to Gila County Department of Health.

(928) 425-3189 in Globe

(928) 474-1210 in Payson

Mosquito activity will continue until the first frost. WNV infection is preventable by reducing the number of mosquitoes around your home and taking personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites on and around your property – including items such as old tires, buckets, clogged rain gutters, cans

and other containers, and anything else that can hold a small amount of water.

- Change the water in birdbaths, kid's pools, and animal watering pans/troughs at least twice a week.
- Apply DEET-containing insect repellent to exposed skin when outdoors.
- Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, and socks while outdoors. Limit time outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Fix or install window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of your home.
- Trash cans should have tight fitting lids. In the absence of tight fitting lids, it is recommended that residents drill small holes in the bottom of the trash container to drain any rain water.

Most humans infected by the West Nile Virus show no symptoms. About 20 percent of infected people will have symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes rash. Less than one percent become seriously ill. Symptoms typically occur within three to fourteen days after the bite of an infected mosquito. The most serious symptoms of West Nile infections may include severe headache, stiff neck, disorientation, seizures, and coma. The disease may progress to death. There is no specific treatment for WNV infection other than supportive care. There is no human vaccine available at this time. The illness is not spread from person-to-person. If you believe you are experiencing symptoms consistent with West Nile Fever, contact your physician.

Horse owners are reminded that West Nile Virus can be transmitted to the equine species and vaccination is available through your veterinarian.

For more information on West Nile Virus, contact the State Hotline at 1-800-314-9243, or visit the following web site: www.westnileaz.com For local information on West Nile Virus, please call the Gila County West Nile Virus Hotline at (928)402-8894, or if calling from the Payson area, 1-800-304-4452 extension 8111.