



# NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER



LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

3140 N Street, Lincoln NE 68510 • Phone: 441-8000

Fax: 441-6229

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** John Chess, REHS, MPA, Water Quality Supervisor,  
Environmental Public Health Division, 441-8027

## **West Nile Virus found in Mosquitoes in Lancaster County**

“We received news yesterday from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services that mosquitoes trapped by Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department staff in late June were found to be infected with West Nile Virus,” said John J. Chess, Water Quality Program Supervisor with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. “Fortunately there have not been any human cases in Lancaster County yet this year.”

“At this time there are no plans to spray for West Nile Virus. Key factors in the decision to spray include the number of mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus, the virus activity in mosquitoes, and if we have human cases. We will continue to monitor both as the summer progresses,” said Chess. As we move into August and September, the mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus become more common and so does the virus. So, from now until the end of summer if you get bit, it is more likely to be by a mosquito that can carry the virus and your risk of getting West Nile Virus is higher.

“We want to encourage everyone in Lincoln and Lancaster County to “Fight the Bite” and prevent mosquito bites by wearing repellent and avoiding being outside at dusk and dawn,” said Chess. Only EPA registered insect repellents should be used, such as those with DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always be sure to follow label directions. People can also wear lightweight long-sleeved shirts and pants outside during hours around dusk and dawn.

In addition, the Health Department is asking for the public’s help to reduce the breeding areas for mosquitoes. The heavy rainfall will increase the numbers of mosquitoes and the risk for West Nile Disease. People are encouraged to take the following actions:

- Store buckets, containers and tires where they cannot collect water.
- Dump small wading pools daily, and maintain swimming pools properly
- Maintain garden ponds and fountains, and always keep water flowing.
- Clear debris, weeds and litter from drainage ways.
- Change water in birdbaths weekly and pet bowls daily.
- Fill in low spots on your property.
- Keep rain gutters free of leaves and debris.
- Remove vegetation from sewage lagoons.

