

NEWS RELEASE
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For immediate release

West Nile Virus Precautions

Sunrise Health Region is reminding residents to be aware of mosquitoes that may carry the West Nile Virus. With record rainfalls throughout the region this spring, experts are anticipating the mosquito population to reach record numbers.

The West Nile Virus is carried by Culex Tarsalis mosquitoes, a species that has been found in this area and caused illness in previous years. The risk of West Nile Virus is anticipated again this summer. Culex Tarsalis mosquito numbers usually peak in late July and August but the species has already been found in traps in southern Saskatchewan triggering the need for precautions.

Precautions to help reduce your exposure to mosquito bites include:

- Plan for outdoor activities at times other than dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are the most active.
- Wear light colored, long-sleeve clothing.
- Use an appropriate mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- Mosquito-proof your home by checking and repairing window screens.
- Keep your property free of standing water when possible, watch for pockets where rainwater can collect and mosquitoes can breed such as inside old tires, empty flower pots and bird baths.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus experience no symptoms or mild illness (fever, headaches, body aches). However, the virus can result in serious neurological illness such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) which can have long-term complications and can even cause death.

For updates on West Nile Virus, visit:

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/west-nile-virus>

To learn the proper way to use mosquito repellent, visit:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/protect-proteger/use-utiliser/_mosquito-moustique/index-eng.php

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For information about this news release or to arrange interviews, please contact Sharon Tropin, Director of Communications 306.786.0144.