News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Friday, September 1, 2006

Fremont County Man Wyoming's First West Nile Virus Death

CHEYENNE óWyoming Department of Health officials are confirming that an elderly Fremont County man died Wednesday night at Wyoming Medical Center in Casper as a result of West Nile virus.

õWhile most people infected with West Nile virus never develop symptoms or experience mild illness, unfortunately the very old and the very young can be vulnerable to the more serious West Nile neuroinvasive disease,ö said Clay Van Houten, Jr., chief of the Emerging Diseases Section for the Wyoming Department of Health. The man had developed encephalitis and experienced respiratory failure as a result of West Nile virus late last month.

West Nile virus infections continue to increase around the state with nine more positive lab tests cases reported to Wyoming Department of Health officials since Tuesday.

The new test results bring the total number of human West Nile virus infections reported in Wyoming for 2006 to 21, with 13 of those in Fremont County. Wyoming had 12 human cases and two deaths in 2005.

Mosquitoes spread West Nile virus after they feed on infected birds and then bite people, other birds and animals. The õ5 Døsö of West Nile virus prevention as recommended by the Wyoming Department of Health are:

- 1) DAWN and 2) DUSK Most mosquitoes prefer to feed at dawn or dusk, so avoid spending time outside during these times.
- 3) DRESS ó Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when spending time outdoors. Clothing should be light-colored and made of tightly woven material
- 4) DRAIN ó Mosquitoes breed in shallow, stagnant water. Reduce the amount of standing water in or near your property by draining and/or removing it.
 - 5) DEET ó Use an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

More information on preventing West Nile virus is available on the web at www.badskeeter.org or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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