



Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

Contacts: **Mary Gomez**
Director, Cochise Health and Social Services
Email: mgomez@cochise.az.gov
Phone: 520-432-9404

Ray Falkenberg
Public Information Officer
Email: rfalkenberg@cochise.az.gov
Phone: 520-432-9414

Date: July 31, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: West Nile Virus May Re-Appear With Monsoon Rains

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that was first detected in the United States in 1999 and Arizona in 2003. The majority of people and animals that are infected with the virus have a mild illness or no symptoms. In rare cases, the virus can cause a more serious condition called encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. The elderly are at a higher risk for disease caused by West Nile virus.

The disease most often affects birds, horses, and humans. Importantly, human-to-human transmission does not occur. The virus is most prevalent from July through October when mosquitoes are most abundant.

Cochise Health and Social Services (CHSS) works with the Arizona Department of Health Services to track human and horse encephalitis cases, including those caused by West Nile virus. The Environmental Health Services Division of CHSS monitors the abundance and type of mosquitoes in Cochise County by regular testing of mosquito pools, and this testing will continue until mosquito season ends in October.

According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, as of 7/30/13 a total of 114 possible human cases of West Nile virus had been investigated in Arizona. Of those possible human cases, none were reported in Cochise County. Additionally, only eight of the possible human cases were classified as "probable", and no cases were laboratory-confirmed.

Who is at Risk and How to Prevent West Nile Virus

There is currently no specific treatment for West Nile virus and no human vaccine to prevent it. Eighty percent of people who are infected with West Nile virus develop no or few symptoms, while 20 percent develop mild symptoms such as headache, body aches, fever greater than 100.4 degrees, mild skin rash, nausea, and swollen lymph glands. Less than 1 percent will develop neurological illnesses, such as encephalitis or meningitis, and may develop paralysis or cognitive difficulties that can last for years, if not for life.

People older than 50 and those with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease and organ transplants, are at greater risk for serious illness. Although most people with mild cases of West Nile virus will recover on their own, anyone who develops symptoms should call their doctor.

*** more ***

Public Programs, Personal Service: www.cochise.az.gov

Email: health@cochise.az.gov

Main: 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603
Benson: 126 W. 5th Street, Benson, AZ 85602
Douglas: 515 7th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607
Sierra Vista: 4115 E. Foothills Dr., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
Willcox: 450 S. Haskell Ave., Willcox, AZ 85643

Phone: 520-432-9400
Phone: 520-586-8200
Phone: 520-805-5600
Phone: 520-803-3900
Phone: 520-384-7100

Fax: 520-432-9480
Fax: 520-586-2051
Fax: 520-364-5453
Fax: 520-459-8195
Fax: 520-384-0309



Cochise Health & Social Services

ne''

The best way to protect yourself from West Nile virus is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes, which can contract the disease from infected birds. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the following preventive steps:

- Avoid outside activity at dawn and dusk during mosquito season (July through October in Cochise County)
- Use DEET-based insect repellents when outdoors
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors
- Don't leave standing water outside in open containers, such as flowerpots, buckets and kiddie pools
- Install or repair windows and door screens
- Use air conditioning when possible
- If you own horses, consider vaccinating them against West Nile Virus

About Cochise Health and Social Services

Cochise Health and Social Services promotes health and quality of life for all Cochise County residents through education, service and leadership. For more information, please visit our website at <http://cochise.az.gov/health>. Recent media releases may be accessed at <http://cochise.az.gov/healthnews>.

###

Public Programs, Personal Service: www.cochise.az.gov

Email: health@cochise.az.gov

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Main: | 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603 | Phone: 520-432-9400 | Fax: 520-432-9480 |
| Benson: | 126 W. 5 th Street, Benson, AZ 85602 | Phone: 520-586-8200 | Fax: 520-586-2051 |
| Douglas: | 515 7 th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607 | Phone: 520-805-5600 | Fax: 520-364-5453 |
| Sierra Vista: | 4115 E. Foothills Dr., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 | Phone: 520-803-3900 | Fax: 520-459-8195 |
| Willcox: | 450 S. Haskell Ave., Willcox, AZ 85643 | Phone: 520-384-7100 | Fax: 520-384-0309 |