

West Nile Virus

“While we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also remember to take steps to protect our health from other illnesses,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “In an effort to decrease our risk of contracting COVID-19 from indoor settings, many of us are spending more time outdoors while still socially distancing. As we enjoy the outdoors, we need to protect ourselves from other viruses carried by mosquitoes by wearing insect repellent and getting rid of standing water around our homes.”

The Southlake Mosquito Abatement District (www.slmad.org) is continuing to monitor local mosquito populations and test samples for West Nile Virus. While the absolute number of mosquitoes is not high, the District has seen an uptick in mosquito samples testing positive for West Nile Virus, making personal protective measures throughout the rest of the season very important.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex pipiens* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, which has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks.

The best way to help prevent West Nile Virus is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. There are some simple precautions you can take to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and protect yourself from being bitten. Precautions include practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel and report.

- **REDUCE** - Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers. Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut.
- **REPEL** - Apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants. When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, standing water in Ravines, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. Residents can report stagnant water @ www.clarkeportal.com