



News

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First Human Case of West Nile Virus Confirmed in Wichita County and First Mosquito Pool Positive for St. Louis Encephalitis

Wichita Falls, Texas- The Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District has confirmed the first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) disease in Wichita County this year. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) laboratory verified the case. This case is among 51 reported across Texas so far in 2025.

“The Environmental Health Division of the Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District administers an integrated Vector Control Program designed to monitor and reduce mosquito populations through surveillance, larval control, and adult mosquito management,” said Amy Fagan, Director of Health. “As part of these ongoing efforts, 21 mosquito samples have been confirmed positive for West Nile Virus in Wichita County during the current surveillance season.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people over 65 years of age are at the highest risk for severe disease. People with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), kidney disease, and those who have received organ transplants, are also at risk. Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not develop any symptoms. People who are infected will develop an abrupt fever, accompanied by other symptoms such as headache, dizziness, nausea, and generalized weakness. Most people with this type of West Nile Virus typically experience worsening symptoms over the next several days to a week. Some patients recover after this period. Patients who do not recover typically experience symptoms such as a stiff neck, confusion, disorientation, dizziness, tremors, and unsteadiness. In severe cases, a coma can develop.

In addition to the confirmed human case of West Nile Virus, the Texas Department of State Health Services laboratory has also confirmed that a mosquito sample collected in Wichita Falls has tested positive for Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLE). The mosquitoes were collected from traps placed throughout the city as part of the Health District’s routine surveillance program. The SLE-positive samples were collected in City Sector 28, near the end of Russell Drive.

This is the first mosquito sample testing positive for Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV) in 2025. The last confirmed SLEV-positive mosquito sample in Wichita County was reported in October 2023. While these findings highlight active mosquito-borne disease transmission in the area, residents can take steps to reduce their risk of infection.

The WFWCPHD Mosquito Control Program will continue following integrated mosquito management principles. Citizens are urged to actively protect themselves from mosquitoes by following the “Four D’s”:

1. Dump/Drain – Remove and drain standing water from containers such as pet bowls, rain barrels, children’s toys, tarps, and similar items. Wipe the sides of containers, since many mosquito species lay eggs just above the waterline.
2. Deet – Use an EPA-approved insect repellent when outdoors. Follow all label instructions for application and reapplication. Parents should consult their pediatrician about the safe use of repellents on young children.
3. Dress – Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, particularly during yard work, sports, or other activities that may stir mosquitoes out of grass or vegetation.
4. Dusk/Dawn (and All Day) – Mosquitoes are typically most active at dawn and dusk. Limit outdoor activities during these times when possible, and use precautions anytime you are outdoors, regardless of the time of day.

Mosquito activity is expected to continue until nighttime temperatures consistently drop below 50°F. The Health District’s Environmental Health Division will continue mosquito surveillance, standing water treatment, habitat elimination, and adult mosquito spraying when weather permits. Spraying is conducted between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. when pollinators are not active, and only if wind speeds are between 1–10 mph.

While only certain mosquito species in Wichita County can transmit diseases like West Nile Virus and Saint Louis Encephalitis, most are nuisance biters. However, residents who develop flu-like symptoms following a mosquito bite should contact their healthcare provider promptly.

To request spraying for mosquitoes, please contact the Health District’s Vector Control unit at 761-7890. For more information about the Health District’s mosquito abatement program, including information about positive pools and future updates, please visit: <https://tx-wichitafalls3.civicplus.com/375/Vector-Mosquito-Control>

For questions about West Nile Virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

For information on West Nile Virus for the State of Texas, visit the Texas DSHS website: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases/west-nile-virus>

For questions about Saint Louis Encephalitis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <https://www.cdc.gov/sle/index.html>