

City of Newton  
201 East Sixth – PO Box 426  
Newton, Kansas 67114-0426



## Press Release

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### Residents can help control mosquito population

An unusually cool, wet spring in Kansas this year has meant more mosquitoes this summer, leading to some concerns about the spread of West Nile virus.

West Nile is transmitted when a mosquito bites an infected bird and then bites another animal or human. Elderly people and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk, but anyone can be infected. In most cases, West Nile only causes mild illness, but in rare cases it can cause death.

The state no longer tests birds for West Nile virus, but the Harvey County Health Department still requests that residents report any dead birds they may find. The most common carriers of West Nile are jays and crows.

Terry Bourlard, assistant director of community services at the [Health Department](#), said the department had received a couple of reports this year of West Nile infection in the county but none of the patients were seriously ill.

Widespread spraying of insecticide has been found to be ineffective against mosquitoes, but the City's Park Department crews do use larvaecide tablets to control mosquito breeding.

To help reduce the mosquito population, residents are encouraged to:

- Keep water moving in ponds to avoid stagnant areas.
- Keep rain gutters clean.
- Empty artificial water containers (children's pools, old tires, buckets, etc.) at least once a week.
- Keep lawns trimmed.
- Rinse out birdbaths with fresh water once or twice a week.

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Residents can also take steps to protect themselves from West Nile infection. Mosquitoes that carry West Nile are most common from May to October and are active in the early-morning hours, evenings, and after nightfall.

- Limit outdoor activity during these times. If you must go outside, wear long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks.
- Insect repellents containing DEET work best for repelling mosquitoes and should be applied sparingly to skin and clothing.
- Repellent should have no more than 20 percent to 30 percent DEET for adults and less than 10 percent for children.
- Prevent mosquitoes from entering your home by making sure window and door screens are “bug tight.” Use a yellow or fluorescent light outside instead of white lights.

For more information, contact the [Health Department](#) at (316) 283-5667.

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