



# NuisanceNews

A quarterly publication from the Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department

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West Nile virus is an arthropod-borne virus (arbovirus) most commonly spread by infected mosquitoes. In rare cases, West Nile virus can cause febrile illness, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord).

Most people get infected with West Nile virus by the bite of an infected mosquito.

Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to humans and other animals. In a very small number of cases, West Nile virus has been spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, and from mother to baby during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding.

Most people will never become infected with West Nile virus. Of those people who do, 70% to 80% will not develop any symptoms.

About 1 in 5 people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of West Nile virus disease recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Less than 1% of people who are infected will develop a severe neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues). The symptoms of neurologic illness can include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, seizures, or paralysis.

Recovery from severe disease may take months. Some of the neurologic effects may be permanent. 10% of people who develop neurologic infection due to West Nile virus will die.

Typically it takes 2 to 6 days before an infected person develops symptoms. This period can be longer in people with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system.

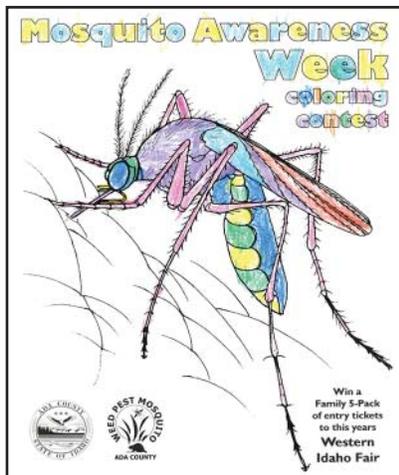
Diagnosis for West Nile virus is based on a combination of clinical signs and symptoms and specialized laboratory tests of blood or spinal fluid. These tests typically detect antibodies that the immune system makes against the viral infection.

West Nile virus is not transmitted from person-to-person, animal-to-person, handling live or dead infected birds, or through consuming infected birds or animals. However, for general health reasons, one should always follow proper procedures for fully cooking meat from either birds or mammals and never handle dead animals without gloves.

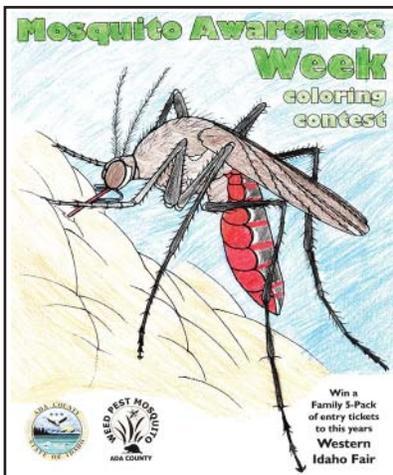
Currently there is no West Nile virus vaccine available for people. Scientists are working on this issue, and there is hope that a vaccine will become available in the near future.



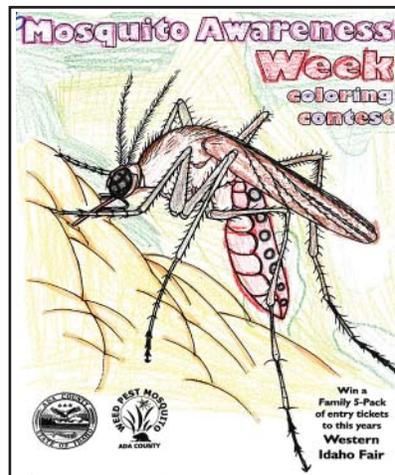
# Coloring Contest Winners



*Lily-Ann Buchholz (winner ages 0-4)*



*Madison R. Honn (winner ages 5-8)*



*Kaitlyn Culley (winner ages 9-12)*

Congratulations to all the winners of this year's Mosquito Awareness Week Coloring Contest and a big thank you to all those who participated. This was our first attempt at a coloring contest and the turn-out was impressive. The entries were judged on creativity, neatness, effort, and realism. There were many excellent entries to choose from and narrowing it down to three winners was a very difficult process. Winners received a family 5-pack of entry tickets and a VIP parking pass to this year's Western Idaho Fair. The winning artists were also invited to the Ada County Courthouse where they were recognized by the Ada County Commissioners.

## Have You Seen This Noxious Weed?



### Houndstongue

Houndstongue grows on rangeland, pastures, abandoned cropland, roadsides, open woodlands, and waste areas. It is common on gravelly, alkaline soils. Houndstongue is a poor competitor with native plants and usually needs disturbed or bare areas to establish.

Houndstongue contains alkaloids that are toxic to grazing animals. It can attack the liver and cause neurological effects. Standing plants are not palatable, but become more palatable when dried or after herbicide treatment. Livestock are most likely to consume houndstongue in contaminated hay.

Houndstongue reproduces solely from seed. Mature plants can produce up to 2,000 seeds. Buried seed survives less than 1 year. Seed remains viable on the parent plant for 2 to 3 years. The seeds stick to clothing and shoes, dogs, livestock, and wildlife. This enables the plant to spread long distances. Seeds are difficult to remove and reduce the value of wool. Seeds may also cause irritation to cattle.

# Chikungunya virus becoming a concern in the United States.



Chikungunya is a virus that is spread by mosquitoes and has recently made its way to America. The virus is extremely serious because there is no vaccine and no cure. The virus is not fatal but symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. The joint pain is often very debilitating and can last anywhere from a few days to a few months. In some cases the joint pain may become chronic and last for years.

Chikungunya was first diagnosed in 1952 in Tanganyika, Africa. It has since spread throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and now the United States. Travelers from the United States who visit these areas are at risk of contracting the disease and bringing it back to America. This is a concern because mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a human host already infected with the virus. An infected mosquito can then spread the virus person to person through bites.

The word chikungunya is thought to derive from a description in the Makonde language, meaning “that which bends up”, of the contorted posture of people affected with the severe joint pain and arthritic symptoms associated with this disease. It is transmitted by the bite of a female mosquito specifically from the species *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*. These are the same species that transmit other diseases like Dengue fever. Symptoms can develop anywhere between two to twelve days after being bit. The disease is most commonly diagnosed through serological or virological tests.

Since its discovery, Chikungunya has spread to over forty countries. Because of its similar symptoms it can be confused with Dengue fever. Joint pain seems to be more severe in Chikungunya, but fatalities are more common in Dengue fever. Blood tests are necessary to get a positive diagnosis.

There is no vaccine or cure for Chikungunya. The risk of getting this disease is particularly high for travelers abroad and precautions should be taken. Covering up by wearing long sleeves and long pants in the evenings when mosquitoes are most active and using a DEET based repellent on exposed skin will help reduce exposure to potentially infected mosquitoes. Ultimately, prevention is the best way to fight the spread of this disease. Removing or treating standing water will help reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding grounds. A mosquito needs a standing water source to complete its life cycle of egg, to larvae, to pupae, to adult mosquito. Removing the water source will prevent future mosquitoes from breeding.

# The Facts About Mosquito Fogging

*(This article originally appeared in the May 2013 edition of the Nuisance News.)*



Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement will begin its night time mosquito fogging or Adulticiding Program later this month. Ultimately, our goal is to eliminate mosquitoes at the larvae or pupae stage, before they become flying adult mosquitoes, but in the event we don't get to them soon enough, our Adulticiding crew will then step into action.

There are some common misconceptions about mosquito fogging in regards to public safety. We assure you that public safety is our number one concern and we take it very seriously. The pesticides we use are environmentally safe and pose no threat to plants, animals, or people. The reason we fog in the evening isn't because people will be inside, it's because that's the time when mosquitoes are most active. According to the Environmental Protection Agency mosquito adulticides are applied as ultra-low volume (ULV) sprays. ULV sprayers dispense very fine aerosol droplets that stay aloft and kill flying mosquitoes on contact. ULV applications involve small quantities of pesticide active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, typically less than 3 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risks to people and the environment.

Adulticides can be used for public health mosquito control programs without posing risks of concern to the general population or to the environment when applied according to the pesticide label. For more information on the pesticides commonly used in public health mosquito control programs log onto the EPA web site and look under Mosquito Control.

Our mosquito fogging trucks are customized to deliver insecticide applications to pastures, commercial and industrial properties, parks, and residential subdivisions. Our trucks are prepared and equipped with a Dyna Jet ULV Fogger with a 300 foot spray swath, an AIRMAR Weather Station which receives current weather data such as wind speed, wind direction, and temperature, and GIS/GPS technology to track and map all insecticide applications.



If you have unusually high numbers of mosquitoes this summer where you live, please give us a call at 208-577-4646 and we will respond promptly. Requests for mosquito fogs can also be made online under [adaweb.net/WPM](http://adaweb.net/WPM). Controlling mosquito populations will make evenings much more enjoyable this summer and will significantly reduce the threat of West Nile virus.

# Gophers Pose Serious Health Risks

Gophers are not only a threat to damage property and crops, but they are also known carriers of rabies and monkeypox, a virus that attacks lymph nodes. Be particularly careful if an animal is out of its burrow and does not show fear. Given the shy, reclusive nature of a gopher, this is a big clue the animal may be sick.



*Boise resident took this photo of a gopher in his back yard.  
Photo courtesy: My Happy Eye Photography.*

In addition, gophers are commonly infested with lice, fleas, ticks and mites, as is common with all rodents. Never handle a dead gopher without gloves. You run the risk of becoming exposed to potential disease. Domestic pets can also encounter gophers by digging them up or catching one making a rare trip above ground. Animals who spend time outdoors should be monitored frequently if gopher mounds are present.

A less recognized health risk is injury from stepping into holes, tunnels or voids created by the digging and tunneling habits of a gopher. Sprained ankles and even broken legs are common. Be particularly careful while riding a horse in gopher country as both horse and rider can be injured.

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