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## **CDC Has Confirmed Human Case of West Nile Virus in Yakima County**

October 3, 2008 (Yakima, WA) — The Yakima Health District (YHD) was notified yesterday by the Washington State Department of Health that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, GA had confirmed a case of West Nile Virus (WNV) from the Mid-Yakima Valley. Last month the Washington State Department of Health's Public Health Laboratory informed YHD of the WNV positive test, but the case was not considered *confirmed* until the CDC showed positive results as well.

The case, a female in her fifties, was first brought to the attention of health officials in September after preliminary testing performed at a commercial laboratory revealed elevated levels of antibodies to WNV. The individual also reported a history of mosquito bites along with symptoms such as fever, headaches, muscle aches, sore throat and a rash that started in mid-August. These symptoms are consistent with the mild form of infection known as "WNV fever." The individual reports no recent travel outside of the county and is currently recovering.

WNV has been detected in Yakima County horses, birds, and/or mosquitoes over the past four consecutive summers, yet this is the first *CDC confirmed* human case of WNV *proven* to have been acquired in Yakima County. A western Washington blood donor appeared to have acquired an asymptomatic WNV infection in late July 2008 either here in Yakima County or in Oregon, but the exact location at the time of infection could not be determined.

Only one in five infected people develop symptoms of WNV. The onset of illness occurs 3-14 days after being infected by the bite of a mosquito carrying the virus. Illness typically resolves without medical intervention. Symptoms include varying degrees of fever, headache, body aches, rash, and swollen lymph nodes. A more serious form of WNV disease affects less than 1 percent of symptomatic cases, producing symptoms such as neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, or even death. Individuals over 50 years of age appear to be more susceptible to developing this more serious form of WNV. People experiencing any of the above symptoms should consult their medical provider.

The message on what residents should do to prevent WNV remains the same;

1. Eliminate standing water that mosquitoes breed in. Anything that can hold water can become a mosquito breeding ground in less than a week. Health officials recommend

changing water in pet bowls, animal troughs and bird baths at least once weekly, fixing leaky faucets that can create puddles and emptying saucers for potted plants regularly.

2. Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes altogether. Screen windows and doors that remain open for ventilation. When possible, avoid being outside at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active. People should also cover their skin by wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, socks, and shoes. Mosquito repellants containing DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 are safe and effective against mosquitoes when used according to label instructions.

WNV transmission tends to cease when the first overnight frost occurs in the fall, which should be happening in the next few weeks.

For more information on West Nile Virus visit the YHD Website at [www.yakimapublichealth.org](http://www.yakimapublichealth.org).

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