One out of six tested pools of mosquitoes in Chase County has tested positive for West Nile virus according to the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

“West Nile virus spreads when mosquitoes get the virus from infected birds and pass it on to other birds, animals and people.” states Helena Janousek, Health Educator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “There is no vaccine, but there are simple steps you can take to avoid getting the virus.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus can vary, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

·Most people, approximately 80 percent or 4 out of 5 who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

·Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected, have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.

·A few people, about one in 150 people will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.

To avoid mosquito bites, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services recommends:

. Applying mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus;

. Wearing long-sleeved shirt, pants and socks;

. Avoiding going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active; and

.Eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

“It is important to take the necessary precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes.” States Myra Stoney, Director at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “The West Nile Virus in not limited to the locations which have positive tested pools of mosquitoes.”

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at http://www.swhealthdept.com/health.htm

You may also call the McCook office at 308-345-4223 or Imperial office at 308-882-4269 for more information or educational materials.