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# News Release

September 18, 2017

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## **MOSQUITOES TRAPPED IN GEM COUNTY TEST POSITIVE FOR ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS**

Mosquitoes trapped in two locations within the Gem County Mosquito Abatement District (GCMAD) have tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV). Both areas are currently being treated, but treatments have been hampered by weather conditions. Treatments will continue as the weather allows.

Residents are encouraged to take extra precautions to avoid being bitten:

- Use insect repellent when outdoors,
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants between the hours of dusk and dawn when mosquitoes that spread West Nile Virus and SLEV are most active,
- Make sure screens in doors and windows are in good repair to keep mosquitoes out, and
- Eliminate standing water on your property

Like West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Most humans infected with the virus do not show any sign of illness or if they do, it is usually mild flu-like symptoms. When more severe symptoms do appear, the onset is usually abrupt with fever, headache, dizziness, nausea, and malaise (tiredness/lethargy). If symptoms worsen, they can include neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, and rarely coma, convulsions and paralysis. Incubation time is 5 to 15 days. The risk of severe disease generally increases with age. Elderly people who are infected are more at risk for severe symptoms.

No vaccine is available for SLEV and antibiotics are not effective. The last documented human case of SLEV in Idaho was in 2006.

For more information on St. Louis Encephalitis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site at: <https://www.cdc.gov/sle/index.html>.

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