

August Newsletter 2009

West Nile Virus

In recent years the West Nile Virus(WNV) has become a concern both nationally and locally. Cases have been documented in all the 48 contiguous United States. Greater detail of its presence in Idaho can be found at www.westnile.idaho.gov.

The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes and most commonly affects birds. It can also be transmitted to other species including horses, humans and dogs.

Infected dogs typically do not show any symptoms or only mild symptoms. These include lethargy, fever, and neurological symptoms, however, cases with symptoms are rare in dogs. Currently, there is no concern that it can be transmitted from dogs to humans. Dogs are considered “dead-end” hosts, meaning they can be infected, but they cannot infect other species.

There is currently no specific treatment for WNV. If a dog is diagnosed, then symptom related supportive care is the approach. The level of care would depend on the severity of the symptoms.

Prevention of the virus equals prevention of mosquito bites. Avoidance of highly mosquito infested areas is always of benefit. If avoidance is not possible, Advantix topical, applied monthly, repels mosquitos. Advantix is available on our website www.intermountainvet.com through the Pet Portal system.

While dogs are not at high risk for infection, it is good to be aware of WNV for both your pets health and your own health. If you have any questions either regarding the illness or on how to access the Pet Portal feel free to give us a call.