

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ALERT
New World Screwworm: First Animal Detection in United States

June 4, 2026

Background:

New World Screwworm (NWS) is a re-emerging myiasis that has now been confirmed to be present in the United States after being eradicated in 1966. A 3-week-old calf in Zavala County, Texas was found to be infested with New World Screwworm myiasis on June 3, 2026, confirming local transmission: [USDA Confirms New World Screwworm in Texas](#). While NWS has not been found in New Mexico, our proximity to areas with local transmission requires elevated clinical suspicion when patients present with compatible signs and symptoms and a history of travel to affected areas. Zavala County is approximately 275 miles from the Texas-New Mexico border.

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is encouraging healthcare providers to become familiar with NWS myiasis and to consider this diagnosis when assessing patients with compatible clinical signs and risk factors. Healthcare providers should follow the guidance in this alert about assessment and treatment, specimen collection, shipment for testing, and disposal. Healthcare providers should report all suspected NWS cases in humans to NMDOH at (833) 796-8773 (24/7) immediately.

NWS is not directly transmissible from animals to people, among people, or among animals. Infestations are acquired only from eggs laid on wounds or mucous membranes by the NWS fly.



*A New World screwworm larva (top) compared with the larger bot fly larva (bottom)
Photo courtesy Mark Fox, CDC*

Healthcare providers should:

- **Include NWS myiasis in their differential when a patient presents with consistent clinical signs and a history of potential exposure.**
- **Remove and properly dispose of all larvae and eggs that are not submitted for diagnosis to avoid introducing them into the environment.**

Recommendations for Clinicians:

NWS myiasis occurs when NWS flies lay eggs in wounds or in body cavities with mucous membranes, such as the nose, ears, eyes, mouth, or other body orifice.

- The eggs develop into parasitic larvae (maggots) that feed on and burrow into living flesh, in contrast with most forms of myiasis where the maggots consume only dead tissue.
- Although they primarily affect livestock, the flies may lay eggs on all warm-blooded animals, including domestic pets, wildlife, and humans.

- As of June 2, 2026, NWS infestations have been confirmed in over 171,700 animals and 2,070 humans across Central America and Mexico. After cattle, dogs are the second most-commonly affected species in Mexico.

Healthcare providers should consider NWS if the patient:

- Was in an area where NWS is known to be present within 10 days of symptom onset.
- Has a wound that has any of the following characteristics:
 - Is very painful and/or foul-smelling.
 - Is deep and/or has extensive tissue damage.
 - Has evidence of larval infestation.
 - Has a visible egg mass in or around the wound (or mucous membrane).

Healthcare providers are encouraged to review the comprehensive information and resources provided in CDC's HAN: [New World Screwworm: Outbreak Moves into Northern Mexico | HAN | CDC](#).

New Mexico-specific information regarding NWS in animals and humans can be found at [New World Screwworm Awareness](#).

All suspect human cases must be reported immediately to NMDOH 24/7/365 at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773). Staff will provide detailed guidance regarding specimen submission and diagnosis.

Risk Factors

When NWS are present in the environment, factors that may increase an individual's risk include:

- Spending a lot of time outdoors.
- Sleeping outdoors or with open, unscreened windows and/or doors in these areas, especially during the day.
- Living, working, or spending an extended amount of time with or near livestock or other warm-blooded animals in areas where NWS flies are present.
- Have any of the following health conditions that increase the risk of chronic open wounds:
 - A weakened immune system
 - Medical conditions that can cause bleeding or open sores on skin or mucous membranes, such as skin cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Poor oral hygiene or gum disease
 - Have pre-existing open wounds regardless of size, including scratches, cuts, or insect bites

Diagnosis and Notification to Public Health

Diagnosis is made through identifying morphological features of the larvae. All suspect human cases must be reported immediately to NMDOH 24/7/365 at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773).

Specimen collection

- Healthcare providers should use standard precautions when handling larvae.
- All extracted larvae should be placed immediately into 70% ethanol (preferred) or 70% (or greater) isopropanol in a leak proof container that holds enough liquid to submerge all larvae.

- Ten larvae, collected from different depths of the wound, should be submitted to the New Mexico Scientific Laboratory for diagnosis. If there are fewer than 10 larvae collected, submit them all.
- While larvae must be submitted for confirmatory diagnosis, telediagnosis is available through CDC's Diagnostic Parasitology Laboratory (DPDx) for preliminary assessment and is encouraged to avoid delays due to shipping. Contact NMDOH for photo submission guidance.

Specimen shipping

- Healthcare providers and laboratories should immediately report suspected NWS cases in humans to NMDOH at 833-796-8773 to coordinate shipping specimens.
- Specimens must be shipped in 70% ethanol or isopropanol in a leak proof container that holds enough liquid to submerge all larvae. They should be sent at ambient (room) temperature.

Specimen Disposal

- **Do not dispose of any larvae in the trash or outside on the ground.**
- Submerge the remaining larvae and eggs in 70% ethanol or isopropanol in a leak-proof container and place the container into a zip-top plastic bag and seal it.
- Examine patient linens or belongings for any larvae that may have left the wound.
- Dispose of the sealed bag according to your facility's medical waste disposal protocol.
- **Failure to kill and properly dispose of all larvae or eggs may result in the introduction and spread of NWS in the local environment.**

Treatment

There are no medications currently approved for treatment of NWS infestation in humans. Treatment consists of removal of **ALL** larvae. Surgical debridement may be indicated as larvae may burrow deep into wounds. Healthcare providers should be aware of the potential for secondary bacterial infections with NWS myiasis and patients should be assessed clinically for signs of bacterial infection.

- Larvae and eggs should be killed by placing them into a leak-proof container with 70% ethanol (preferred) or isopropanol. The volume of liquid in the container should be enough to fully submerge the larvae.
- Do NOT dispose of extracted larvae or eggs in the trash or on the ground.
- Re-examine treated lesions after 24 to 48 hours to confirm no live larvae remain.

Clinicians with questions about patient management can contact the University of New Mexico Health System Physician Access Line 24/7 consultation and referral services for healthcare professionals (UNM PALS) at 505-272-2000 or contact NMDOH 24/7/365 at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773).

Prevention

For patients spending time in areas where NWS is present, advise them to:

- Clean and cover all wounds on any location on the body, no matter how small.
- Prevent insect bites by:
 - Using an EPA- registered insect repellent
 - Treating clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin
 - Wearing loose fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants, hats, and socks.
- Avoid sleeping outdoors when possible, especially during the daytime. If sleeping outdoors is unavoidable, use a bed net or sleep inside a screened tent.

Additional Resources:

- Handout: [NWS Recommendations for Healthcare Providers / Miasis por el gusano barrenador del Nuevo Mundo: Recomendaciones para los proveedores de atención médica](#)
- Handout: [New World Screwworm: What Healthcare Workers Need to Know](#)
- Webpage: [Clinical Overview of New World Screwworm for health care providers / Información clínica sobre la miasis por el gusano barrenador del Nuevo Mundo](#)
- Webpage: [New World Screwworm Awareness](#)
- Recorded Webinar: CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) (Oct. 2024) [Resurgence of New World Screwworm in the Americas: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know | COCA | CDC](#) (Continuing Education available)
- Recorded Webinars: Extension for Community Health Outcomes Webinars (ECHO) (YouTube Videos)
 - Resurgence of New World Screwworm in the Americas: [For Physicians and Health Care Providers](#)
 - For Community Health Workers and Public Health Professionals: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the “**New Mexico Health Alert Network**” default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.