



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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West Nile Virus is Affecting more Residents of the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – Two additional human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in the Antelope Valley have been reported by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. A man in his 60s was hospitalized in early October with Meningitis due to WNV and has since been discharged. The other person is a woman in her 40s, who was initially diagnosed as positive blood donor in late September, but subsequently developed symptoms consistent with a WNV infection.

Two more dead birds and five chickens have been identified as West Nile positive by the California Department of Public Health. One dead bird was collected near 15th Street East and Avenue J, the other one near 25th Street West and Avenue I in Lancaster. Four of the positive chickens were from coops in Lancaster and one was from a coop in Palmdale near 20th Street East and Avenue Q. That puts the current total of WNV cases in the Antelope Valley at 16 chickens, 5 human cases with one fatality, 5 birds, and 2 mosquito samples.

As of November 5th, 48 Counties in California show WNV activity in 2,488 dead birds, 1,947 mosquito samples, 564 chickens, 31 horses and 32 squirrels. So far this year 369 people have tested positive for WNV, ten of those were fatalities. At the same time, Los Angeles County reported that 150 people with four fatalities, 475 dead birds, 498 mosquito samples, 117 chickens, and 14 tree squirrels have been confirmed positive for the virus.

West Nile Virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals. Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- * Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- * Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- * Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- * Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

The public is asked to help with West Nile Virus surveillance and control efforts by reporting dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at www.avmosquito.org.