



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Two Human Cases of West Nile Virus in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has informed the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) that two Antelope Valley residents have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

These are the first human cases of WNV in the Antelope Valley this year. Last year a man from Lancaster was the first person ever to have been infected with WNV in the AV. This year a 53 year old Palmdale man who started showing symptoms on August 8, 08 was hospitalized with meningitis and subsequently identified with WNV. The other is a 22 year old Lancaster woman who got ill on August 15, 08 and was also hospitalized with meningitis. Both have since been discharged and are recovering.

The California Department of Health Services has also identified a bird in Palmdale near 30th Street West and Avenue P that was positive for WNV. It had been reported on September 9, 08. Currently the total number of WNV cases in the Antelope Valley is 2 human cases, 1 mosquito sample and 3 birds.

“The confirmation of these human cases reminds us that we all need to protect ourselves from mosquito bites,” District Manager Cei Kratz said. “Our biggest concerns for mosquito breeding still are unkempt, green pools. Residents are encouraged to call the district office to report any bad pools, so we can check and treat them if necessary.” Residents are urged to clean or drain their pools, since it poses a Public Health threat and could also get expensive. The AVMVCD is empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to fine them up to \$1,000 per day until the problem is fixed.

Throughout California 42 Counties show WNV activity in 1,965 dead birds, 1,628 mosquito samples, 196 chickens, 18 horses and 22 squirrels. So far this year 205 people have tested positive for WNV, five of those were fatalities. To date in Los Angeles County, 91 people, 346 dead birds, 396 mosquito samples, 39 chickens, and 8 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.