



For Immediate Release:

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First Human Cases of West Nile Virus in LA County Confirmed

LOS ANGELES – The County Health Officer has confirmed two human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Los Angeles County. Both cases are middle-aged males who have preexisting health conditions and were hospitalized. They are recovering. Several agencies in Southern California, including the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD), have been cautioning residents that this year is a particularly active year for mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus.

“People should take precautions to avoid mosquitoes, as that is the primary way this disease is transmitted. Mosquitoes obtain the virus by feeding on infected wild birds,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “West Nile Virus can appear anywhere in Los Angeles County or around the state. We urge residents to get rid of pools of stagnant water around their homes, where mosquitoes breed. Use a repellent containing DEET, or another approved repellent, when outdoors in mosquito-prone areas, especially around dawn or dusk.”

As of August 5th in LA County, mosquito abatement districts have detected WNV in 45 dead birds and 115 mosquito samples. The samples were taken in various parts of Los Angeles County, demonstrating that the virus can affect any location.

“The level of West Nile Virus detected in mosquito samples and dead birds in Los Angeles County this July is the highest it has been since the last epidemic year in 2008,” said Suzanne Kluh, Director of Scientific-Technical Services, Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District. “We are urging residents to take notice of the elevated level of activity this summer and protect themselves.”

About West Nile Virus:

WNV is spread from humans through the bite of an infected mosquito; mosquitoes can become infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. Most mosquitoes do not carry the virus and most people bitten by a mosquito have not been exposed to the virus. The virus is not spread through person-to-person contact, or directly from birds to humans.

In most cases, people who are infected with West Nile Virus never become sick, or have only very mild symptoms that include fever, headache, nausea, body aches, and a mild skin rash. Symptoms of West Nile Virus could appear within three to 12 days after infection. Fewer than one in 150 people who are bitten by an infected mosquito become severely ill, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In these rare cases, the virus can cause encephalitis and death. Young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk for severe cases of the disease. There is no specific treatment for West Nile Virus. However, individuals with severe symptoms may be hospitalized.



Decrease risk of infection:

- Avoid mosquito-infested areas at dawn and dusk.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
- Repellants containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of eucalyptus, when used as labeled, are effective defenses against mosquitoes.
- Check your window screens for holes.
- Do not allow water to collect and stagnate in old tires, flowerpots, swimming pools, birdbaths, pet bowls, or other containers. These are prime breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools; drain water from pool covers.
- Stock garden ponds with goldfish or other mosquito-eating fish. These eat mosquito eggs and larvae.
- Empty and wash birdbaths and wading pools weekly.

More information:

- Information on West Nile Virus by phone: (800) 975-4448.
- Information on West Nile Virus on the web: <http://westnile.ca.gov/>
- If a recently dead bird (less than 24 hours) is found, call (877) 747-2243 for instructions on handling.
- Report “green pools” or stagnant swimming pools in Los Angeles County by calling the Public Health Environmental Health Bureau at (626) 430-5200.

Where to call with questions about mosquitoes:

Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District: (562) 944-9656

Los Angeles County West Vector Control District: (310) 915-7370

San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District: (626) 814-9466

Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District: (661) 942-2917

Compton Creek Mosquito Abatement District: (310) 639-7375

Pasadena City Health Department: (626) 744-6004

City of Long Beach Vector Control Program: (562) 570-4132

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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