



NEWS RELEASE

Public Health

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First death from West Nile Virus confirmed

An elderly western San Bernardino County male resident with serious health problems who tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) has become the county's first WNV-associated death of 2017.

A total of eight WNV cases have been detected within the county this year. In 2016, San Bernardino County detected eight WNV cases, including two deaths. As of Aug. 25, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has reported 59 cases of WNV illness this year.

"The family has my sincerest condolences with the loss of their family member," said San Bernardino County Health Officer Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare. "West Nile Virus can cause a deadly infection in humans and I urge residents to take precautions and protect themselves against mosquito bites."

WNV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Signs and symptoms of WNV may include fever, body aches, rash, nausea, vomiting and headache. Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms. However, people 50 years of age and older and individuals with diabetes or hypertension have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop complications. The most effective way to avoid WNV infection is to prevent mosquito bites.

Residents can protect themselves from mosquito bites by taking the following precautions:

- DAWN and DUSK** – Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active.
- DRESS** – Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts that are loose fitting and light colored.
- DRAIN** – Remove or drain all standing water around your property where mosquitoes lay eggs (birdbaths, ponds, old tires, buckets, clogged gutters or puddles from leaky sprinklers).
- DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET. When using DEET, be sure to read and follow the label instructions.
- DOORS** – Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.
- REPORT** – Report green or neglected pools by calling the Department of Public Health's Division of Environmental Health Services at 1-800-442-2283. Press 3 when prompted.

The public can participate in the WNV surveillance program by reporting dead birds to the state's WNV toll-free hotline at 877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473) or at www.westnile.ca.gov.

For more information on WNV, visit the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services' Mosquito and Vector Control Program at www.sbcounty.gov/dph/ehs or call the Communicable Disease Section at 1-800-722-4794.

