



## NEWS RELEASE

### Public Health

September 14, 2018

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## First locally-acquired human case of West Nile virus reported in High Desert

San Bernardino County Department of Public Health has confirmed its first locally-acquired human case of West Nile virus (WNV) illness in the High Desert. This is the first case in the High Desert since 2013. In previous cases, it was suspected the infection was acquired outside of the region.

"West Nile Virus can cause a serious illness in humans, therefore I urge residents to take precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites" said San Bernardino County Health Officer Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D.

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, hypertension, are immunocompromised, or have a recent history of chemotherapy 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.

The risk of infection due to WNV typically increases around this time of year, from summer through early fall. Residents are encouraged to protect themselves from mosquito bites during outdoor activities, especially those at lakes, rivers, or other bodies of water.

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.

For more information on WNV, visit the Mosquito and Vector Control Program at <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/ehs/> or call the Communicable Disease Section (CDS) at 1 (800) 722-4794.

