



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Tom Christensen (619) 515-6535

Department of Environmental Health Contact: Chris Conlan (858) 694-2137

COUNTY REPORTS FIRST 2009 HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE

Virus Was Not Locally Acquired

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) reports the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus (WNV) for 2009. A 76-year-old male was hospitalized with meningitis and encephalitis after developing symptoms consistent with WNV infection. The man did not acquire the virus locally.

“Even though this man did not acquire WNV here, it is a good reminder for the public to take appropriate precautions to protect against contracting the virus,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed., Deputy County Public Health Officer. “Avoid outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes that can transmit the virus are active, use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.”

Other precautions include wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors; ensuring that windows and doors have tight fitting screens without holes or tears; and not sleeping outside, unprotected while camping.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms or become seriously ill. Nearly one in five who do fall ill may suffer from headache, fever, nausea, fatigue, skin rash or swollen glands. The risk of complications increases for those over age 50, and those who have weakened immune systems. In 2008, 35 people tested positive for locally-acquired WNV in San Diego County.

HHS is working closely with the County Department of Environmental Health Vector Control Program, which continues its mosquito surveillance and control activities to check for and eradicate possible sources of the mosquito breeding. Earlier this week Vector Control officials confirmed two chickens from the Sorrento Valley sentinel flock tested positive for WNV. Sixteen wild birds have also tested positive throughout the county since January of this year.

“We need the public’s help to find mosquito breeding sites throughout the county,” said Jack Miller, Acting Director, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health. “People should check their property weekly to eliminate any standing water sources, where mosquitoes can breed.”

For more information or to report dead birds, please call the County’s WNV information line toll free at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County’s web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.

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