



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: January 23, 2026

From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #1: New World Screwworm Outbreak in Northern Mexico

Key Messages

- New World screwworm (NWS) is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on living tissue and can infest mammals and birds; it largely affects livestock but can also affect pets, wildlife, and humans.
- On January 20, 2026, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a [Health Advisory](#) that confirmed NWS animal cases in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, which shares a border with the U.S. state of Texas.
- Given the potential for geographic spread, CDC issued this Health Advisory to increase awareness of the outbreak and to summarize CDC recommendations.
- No NWS infestations related to this outbreak have been identified in people or animals in the United States as of January 20, 2026.
- Healthcare providers who identify myiasis (maggots) in a patient should ask about travel within 10 days of symptom onset to a country where NWS is present and notify the County Epidemiology Unit immediately.

Actions Requested

1. **Ask** about recent travel to a country where NWS is present in a patient with myiasis (maggots).
2. **Collect** all suspected NWS larvae and place them in a leak-proof container with 70% ethanol, or other alcohol (5 to 10% formalin is an acceptable alternative if alcohol is not available). Alcohol will kill the larvae and preserve them for identification.
3. **Submit** specimens to the County Public Health Laboratory. When completing the [test requisition form](#), select 'Send-Out' under the 'Parasitology' section, and specify 'New World screwworm.'
4. **Never discard** live larvae in the trash, as larvae that are not appropriately disposed of can develop into adult flies, establish a local fly population, and promote further spread within the U.S.
5. **Review** the previous [County of San Diego Health Advisory](#) and recent [CDC Health Advisory](#) on NWS for additional recommendations.
6. **Report** all cases of suspected New World Screwworm infestation to San Diego County Epidemiology Unit by calling 619-692-8499 (8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday); 858-565-5255 (after hours and holidays).

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch

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