



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

August 4, 2016

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West Nile Virus Update for 8/4/16: WNV and Zika

Lancaster, CA – So far this year the Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has confirmed West Nile Virus activity in one dead bird in Palmdale and 9 sentinel chickens from four coops located in the Antelope Valley.

The chicken coops are located near 45th Street West and Avenue L, 50th Street West and Avenue N, 15th Street West and Avenue I, and 40th Street East and Avenue K. AVMVCD technicians take blood samples from 60 chickens every two weeks. These chickens are placed in 10 coops throughout the district at the beginning of each year and serve as sentinels to monitor West Nile Virus and other mosquito borne disease activity.

The dead bird was picked up in Palmdale near 60th Street East and Avenue R on July 11, 2016. Certain bird species such as crows and ravens are susceptible to WNV and will die within a few days of being infected. Since birds can fly long distances it is unknown where they have been infected. Dead bird reports can show patterns of unusually high numbers of birds dying in an area, which district staff will follow up with mosquito traps and thorough inspections.

“Because of the increased virus activity, we are checking all properties with pools that look even slightly suspicious on Google Earth images,” said District Manager Cei Kratz. “If we have reports of a high number of mosquitoes in an area, we will check every pool in that neighborhood, to make sure we’re not missing a mosquito breeding source.”

As of this week the California Department of Public Health reports West Nile Virus activity from 34 Counties in 764 dead birds, 1,487 mosquito samples, and 73 sentinel chickens. Three human cases have been reported from three counties.

Zika:

Zika virus has been in the news a lot lately and people are very nervous about it. Florida just reported 15 cases of “local transmission” in one Miami neighborhood and CDC is advising pregnant women not to travel to that area. The Olympics are also creating a lot of press, since several athletes have dropped out, due to fears of getting infected.

Zika virus is another mosquito-borne virus that is transmitted from one person to another mainly by a certain types of mosquitoes called Yellow - fever mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*) or the Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*). These mosquitoes are very aggressive day-time biters and like to be in close proximity to people. Their eggs are laid in containers and can dry up for a very long time, ready to hatch whenever water is filled into the container.

Most people infected with Zika virus will not have any symptoms, or just mild ones, but the most serious danger is to pregnant women, since it can cause certain birth defects (microcephaly) in their unborn child. As with our native mosquitoes, the best way of avoiding infection with this virus is to remove standing water and use mosquito repellents that are recommended by EPA (<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>). For more detailed information about Zika virus visit www.cdc.gov/zika or <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Zika.aspx>.

Although those mosquito species have been found in other areas of Los Angeles County, at this time there is no evidence of them in the Antelope Valley. Residents are asked to report any day-time mosquito activity to the AVMVCD, so they can inspect the area, to see, if those are the invasive *Aedes* species.

District officials urge residents to follow these tips to avoid getting mosquito bites and West Nile Virus infection:

- Follow the 3 D's (Drain, Dusk/Dawn, Defend/DEET)
- Keep swimming pools maintained or completely dry
- Check your property for any standing water from sprinklers
- Keep screen doors and windows in good repair and close them
- Turn on fans to keep mosquitoes away
- Don't use bug zappers near your house – they attract more mosquitoes than they kill

To stay up-to-date on new WNV activity in the Antelope Valley and any mosquito related information check out our website at www.avmosquito.org, Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/avmosquito>), and follow us on Twitter @AVMosquito.

West Nile Virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. Even 'mild' cases of West Nile Fever can cause patients enormous pain and discomfort for months.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917).