



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 11, 2013

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First Fatality due to West Nile Virus in the Antelope Valley Since 2008

Lancaster, CA – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has informed the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) about the first human death attributed to West Nile Virus (WNV) infection in the Antelope Valley. The elderly Lancaster man was hospitalized with encephalitis in late September and died shortly thereafter.

“While most people infected with West Nile Virus show no symptoms, some individuals may experience severe symptoms and even die. Older adults and those with weakened immune systems are at greater risk for complications than others,” District Manager Cei Kratz said. “It’s important to remember that WNV can affect anybody. We continue to urge people of all ages to take precautions, such as removing stagnant water around their homes and using an insect repellent when outdoors, especially around dawn or dusk.”

The AVMVCD has also received reports about two more human cases, one in Lancaster and one in Palmdale. In addition, four chickens from three coops in Quartz Hill and Palmdale have tested positive for WNV infection. This brings the WNV total in the AV to 15 human infections, including two asymptomatic blood donors, 25 chickens, 5 mosquito samples, and 4 dead birds.

As of October 10th the CA Department of Public Health has reported 237 human cases and 6 fatalities, as well as 1,142 birds, 2,440 mosquito samples, 425 chickens, 11 horses, and 8 tree squirrels from 41 Counties that have tested positive for WNV.

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.

To keep mosquitoes away and stay safe, follow these tips:

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

Also remember to:

- Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for fish ponds, pools, and horse troughs.
- Vaccinate your horses properly.
- Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.
- Report dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at www.avmosquito.org, like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/avmosquito>), or follow us on Twitter @AVMosquito.