



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
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NEWS RELEASE – **For Immediate Release**

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First Human Case of West Nile Virus in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has notified the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) late Friday of a resident of the Antelope Valley who has been infected with West Nile Virus (WNV).

In late September an elderly male from Lancaster was hospitalized with headache, fever, and altered consciousness and subsequently diagnosed with a neuroinvasive form of WNV. The individual had underlying medical conditions which made him more susceptible to developing WNV symptoms. He since has been discharged from the hospital.

“Last month we reported a human case of West Nile fever, which turned out to be a false positive and was removed from the tally,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “That means this is now the first human case of WNV in the Antelope Valley.” Additionally 4 chickens and 5 birds tested positive for WNV and one chicken tested positive for Western Equine Encephalitis in the AV.

In California, WNV has to date affected 51 Counties, where it has been detected in 1,237 dead birds, 973 mosquito samples, 400 chickens, 25 horses and 322 humans, and has resulted in 14 fatalities. So far in Los Angeles County, 81 mosquito samples, 141 dead birds, 16 chickens, as well as 30 humans have been confirmed positive for the virus. One person has died from the WNV infection. Most of the cases have been located in the San Fernando Valley.

Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals. Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- * Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- * Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- * Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- * Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

The public is asked to help with West Nile Virus surveillance and control efforts by reporting dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

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.