



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **Second Human Death of West Nile Virus Confirmed in LA County** Reminder to all residents to take precautions against mosquitoes

LOS ANGELES – A second human death from West Nile virus (WNV) has been confirmed this year. The fatalities occurred in two elderly adults from the southeastern part of LA County. To date, 54 human cases of WNV illness have been reported. WNV is passed to people through the bite of an infected mosquito; mosquitoes obtain the virus by feeding on infected wild birds. The Los Angeles County Health Officer would like to remind all residents to take precautions against mosquito bites.

“While most people bitten by a mosquito are not exposed to West Nile virus, some individuals may become infected with this disease and may experience symptoms that can last for months, or even years, such as fatigue, malaise, and depression,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Other manifestations of the illness include symptoms of meningitis and encephalitis that can lead to hospitalization.”

As of today, vector control districts have detected WNV in 170 dead birds, 5 squirrels, and 196 mosquito pools in LA County. The samples were taken in various parts of Los Angeles County, demonstrating that the virus can affect any location. While agencies such as the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District and the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District are actively treating areas with high mosquito populations, residents are urged to do their part.

- **Dead birds may be reported by calling (877) 968-2473 or logging onto <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/DeadBirdReporting.htm>.**
- **Stagnant swimming pools or green pools should be reported to the Public Health Environmental Health Bureau at (626) 430-5200, or to a local vector control agency.**

“As the hot days continue, I urge all residents to protect themselves and their family and friends from mosquito bites by getting rid of stagnant water around their homes; wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors; and using a repellent when in mosquito-prone areas, especially around dawn or dusk,” said Dr. Fielding.

**More about West Nile Virus:**

- WNV is not spread through person-to-person contact or directly from birds to humans.
- Most mosquitoes do not carry the virus.
- In most cases, people who are infected with West Nile virus never become sick, or have only very mild symptoms that include fever, headache, nausea, body aches, and a mild skin rash.
- Symptoms of WNV could appear within three to 12 days after infection.



- Fewer than one in 150 people who are bitten by an infected mosquito become severely ill, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In these rare cases, the virus can cause encephalitis and even death.
- People over 50 years of age and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk for developing severe symptoms, which may require hospitalization.
- Recovery from any infection with the virus can take months to years, and some individuals may never fully recover.
- There is no specific treatment for this disease.

**More tips to decrease risk of infection:**

- Repellants containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of eucalyptus, when used as labeled, are effective defenses against mosquitoes.
- Check window screens for holes.
- Do not allow water to collect and stagnate in old tires, flowerpots, swimming pools, birdbaths, pet bowls, or other containers. These are prime breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools; drain water from pool covers.
- Stock garden ponds with goldfish or other mosquito-eating fish. These eat mosquito eggs and larvae.
- Empty and wash birdbaths and wading pools weekly.

**More information:**

Information on West Nile Virus by phone: (800) 232-4636.

Information on West Nile Virus on the web: <http://westnile.ca.gov/> and <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/VectorWestNile.htm>.

**Where to call with questions about mosquitoes:**

Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District: (562) 944-9656

Los Angeles County West Vector Control District: (310) 915-7370

San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District: (626) 814-9466

Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District: (661) 942-2917

Compton Creek Mosquito Abatement District: (310) 933- 5321

Pasadena City Health Department: (626) 744-6004

City of Long Beach Vector Control Program: (562) 570- 4132

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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