



## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### Local Health Officials Report the First Human West Nile Virus Case for 2008 in Stanislaus County

**STANISLAUS COUNTY**– The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency announced today that a 47-year-old woman has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, the first reported human case in the county this year and the second in California. This case is 10 days earlier than the first human case reported for the county last year and more than three weeks earlier than the first human case of 2006.

“It’s alarming that we have already confirmed our first human case of West Nile Virus infection in the county,” said Dr. John Walker, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. “This early infection is a sign that we will have an extended season of risk for West Nile Virus this year.”

The woman reported mild symptoms of the virus, which can include headaches, body aches, fatigue, and fever. She was not hospitalized and is recovering from the infection. Most people who become infected with WNV will experience no symptoms or health problems. However, in rare cases, people with WNV infection may suffer more serious health problems that affect the central nervous system, causing long-term illness or death.

“While the symptoms in this case were mild, it serves as an important reminder that people really should continue to protect themselves from becoming infected with West Nile Virus,” said Trudi Prevette, Communicable Disease Nurse with the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency. “Many people have forgotten that West Nile Virus is still a health threat in our communities and they have let down their guard.”

The most effective ways for individuals to prevent exposure to mosquito bites and WNV are:

- **DEET** - Apply insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
- **DRESS** - Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure.

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- **DAWN AND DUSK** - Mosquitoes that carry WNV bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- **DRAIN** - Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae.

As of July 2, WNV has also been confirmed in five dead birds in the county this year and a total of 184 dead birds have been reported throughout California. The East Side and Turlock Mosquito Abatement Districts have been closely monitoring WNV activity throughout the county and treating areas to reduce mosquito populations. They have also increased and targeted spraying in areas where people may gather for Fourth of July holiday activities.

Unmaintained swimming pools continue to be a problem in many communities because they become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which can increase the mosquito population by tens of thousands in just one neighborhood. Mosquitoes that were found breeding in backyards accounted for 86% of all the mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile Virus last year. Already this year, more than 800 swimming pools have been identified as mosquito breeding sites and treated by Mosquito Abatement District officials.

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas, Stanislaus County residents living north of the Tuolumne River and east of the San Joaquin River should call the East Side Mosquito Abatement District at 522-4098. All other Stanislaus County residents should contact the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at 634-1234.

To help identify WNV Activity, people should report all dead birds by calling the California Dead Bird hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or report it online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

For more information on WNV, call the Stanislaus County West Nile Virus Hotline at (209) 558-8425, or visit [StanEmergency.com](http://StanEmergency.com).

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