



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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THREAT OF WEST NILE VIRUS PERSISTS WITH FALL WEATHER IN STANISLAUS COUNTY

STANISLAUS COUNTY – With fall weather patterns beginning to develop, the threat of West Nile Virus activity is increasing throughout Stanislaus County. Health officials have noticed a rapid increase in West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes in August and are urging everyone to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites and prevent West Nile Virus infection.

“The changes in weather have created just the right environment for mosquitoes to begin moving into and around residences and have promoted mosquito breeding in our communities,” said Jerry Davis, Manager Turlock Mosquito Abatement District. “Everyone needs to be aware of this as they head outdoors to enjoy the Labor Day Holiday Weekend, and they need to wear insect repellent anytime they go outdoors.”

The District has observed a dramatic increase in West Nile virus infected mosquitoes and is concerned that adult mosquitoes that are moving into town and around homes may become infected with WNV and infect people. The District has been busy routinely spraying places where mosquitoes are, using ground spray equipment and aircraft. The Mosquito Abatement Districts use aircraft in rural locations and ground equipment for more precision spraying in urbanized areas. So far this year the Turlock District and the East Side District have treated a total of 152,713 acres to protect the public from mosquitoes. The Districts also provide to the public mosquito fish, free of charge, to put in ornamental ponds and other backyard locations.

Insect repellent is especially important when mosquitoes are most active just after sundown and just before sunrise. To be effective, repellent should contain DEET, Picaridin, or lemon oil of Eucalyptus. When you must go outdoors, wear long pants and sleeves, and other protective clothing to prevent mosquito bites.

“When farm crops are harvested mosquitoes are also displaced into and around homes in more populated areas,” said Lloyd Douglas, Manager of the Eastside Mosquito Abatement District. “Now would be an excellent time to check your property for any areas that might attract mosquitoes looking for a new home.”

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The best way to keep your environment clear of mosquito-breeding areas is to simply eliminate sources of standing water. Some examples of this include: not over-watering your lawn or garden, changing water in pet dishes and bird baths on a regular basis, and dumping any standing water out of backyard toys, flower pots and garbage cans.

Health officials announced a total of eight confirmed reports of WNV infection in people in Stanislaus County. The infections resulted in five cases of WNV fever and two cases of WNV encephalitis (neuroinvasive disease). The other infection was found in a blood donor who was experiencing no symptoms.

“Unfortunately, we are in an endemic stage with West Nile Virus. It is not going to go away,” said Dr. John Walker, the Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. “It is important that the public is aware that the threat of West Nile Virus persists. They should take every precaution to prevent themselves from mosquito bites”.

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas, Stanislaus County residents should contact one of the two mosquito abatement districts that serve the county. For Stanislaus County addresses north of the Tuolumne River, residents should call the Eastside Mosquito Abatement District at 522-4098 and all others should contact the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at 634-1234.

To report a dead bird, call the California State hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or report it online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Birds of particular interest to the state are crows, ravens, magpies, jays and raptors (hawk or eagle).

For more information, call the West Nile virus hotline at (209) 558-8425 to hear recorded information in both English and Spanish. You can also visit www.stanemergency.com for WNV information.

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