



Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County

Environmental Management of Human Disease Vectors

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Contact: Brian Cabrera
General Manager
Phone: 805-969-5050
Email: bcabrera@mvmddistrict.org

Mosquitoes Caught in Santa Barbara Test Positive for West Nile Virus

A sample of mosquitoes collected from a mosquito trap in Santa Barbara has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV), according to the Mosquito & Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County. The mosquitoes were trapped as part of ongoing surveillance for the invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that were discovered earlier this month. "This is not the first time West Nile virus has been found in Santa Barbara County," says District General Manager Brian Cabrera, "but it has been three years since it was last detected."

Humans can get WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito. However, most people who acquire the virus don't know they are infected and don't develop any symptoms. But about 1 in 5 people who are infected develop symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle ache and nausea. In about 1% of people who get WNV, infection can lead to serious complications including encephalitis or meningitis, coma and even death.

Residents are urged to take action to "Fight the Bite" which includes the "Three Ds":
Deet – use Deet or other repellents approved by the Environmental Protection Agency;
Dawn and Dusk – avoid being outside at these times when the mosquitoes are most active;
Drain – empty all sources of stagnant water that mosquitoes will lay their eggs in including buckets, bird baths, clogged rain gutters, old tires, containers of all kinds, unused hot tubs, etc.

Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants can also provide protection from mosquitoes. Larger sources where mosquitoes are breeding, such as neglected swimming pools or stagnant water in creek beds and washes, for example, can be reported to the District at (805) 969-5050.

Wild birds are the main source of the virus for mosquitoes. Crows, ravens, jays and magpies, are especially susceptible to the virus and often get sick and die after they are infected. Residents are urged to report dead birds to the California Department of Public Health's "Dead Bird Hotline". If the dead birds are still in good condition, the District will pick them up and have them tested for WNV. Reports can be filed online at <http://westnile.ca.gov/report.php> or by calling 1-877-968-2473 (1-877-WNV-BIRD). Horses are also susceptible to the virus but, fortunately, a vaccine is available.

The California Department of Public Health has a West Nile Virus website with lots of valuable information as well as an “Insect Repellent Toolkit” website with information on how you can protect you and your family from mosquito bites. These sites can be found at:

<http://westnile.ca.gov/>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Dont-Give-Bugs-a-Biting-Chance.aspx>