



TULARE COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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West Nile Virus Case Reported in Tulare County

Community Members Should Take Precautions and Protect Themselves

Tulare County Public Health has confirmed a human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in a county resident, which has resulted in the death of an adult male. Public health officials are urging all residents to take preventive measures against mosquito bites, as mosquito samples testing positive for West Nile virus (WNV) have been detected in multiple areas throughout the county. In addition to the human case, three WNV-positive dead birds have been reported.

“Due to this increased activity and this reported case, we strongly encourage residents to use safeguards to reduce their risk of contracting both West Nile Virus and SLEV through mosquito bites. These measures are essential in helping to prevent the spread of West Nile virus and St. Louis Encephalitis virus in Tulare County,” stated Tulare County Public Health Officer Dr. Asma Tariq.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the West Nile virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, and there is no vaccine or medication to treat the virus. Most people infected with West Nile will have no symptoms; however, about 1 in 5 people will develop a fever with other symptoms from 2 to 14 days after being infected. Severe cases of West Nile virus can affect the central nervous system, resulting in meningitis and/or encephalitis, and can result in death or long-term disability.

The St. Louis Encephalitis virus (SLEV) is in the same virus family as West Nile virus. Both viruses are transmitted to humans when bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people infected with SLEV will have few to no symptoms. The most common symptoms are mild, flu-like symptoms, including fever and headache, from 5 to 15 days after being infected. Like West Nile virus, severe cases of SLEV can also affect the central nervous system, resulting in meningitis and/or encephalitis, and can result in death or long-term disability.

Residents are urged to increase their awareness of potential breeding grounds around their properties. Be on the lookout for homes that are unoccupied, since they may have swimming pools or backyard ponds that are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. It is recommended that residents take the following precautions to avoid being bitten, thereby reducing their risk for exposure to both West Nile virus and SLEV:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellent such as DEET. Always follow label instructions carefully.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or in areas where mosquitoes are active.
- Drain standing water that may produce mosquitoes.
- Repair or replace door and window screens that have tears or holes.

Residents who discover a dead bird are advised not to handle the animal with their bare hands. To report the sighting, please contact the West Nile Virus Call Center at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or submit a report online at <https://westnile.ca.gov/report>. Call Center staff will provide instructions on how to safely prepare the bird for pickup or dispose of it in accordance with public health guidelines.



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Contact your local mosquito abatement district if you see areas of standing water that may be breeding areas for mosquitoes. Tulare County has three mosquito abatement districts providing abatement services to residents:

- **Delta Mosquito and Vector Control District (Mosquito Abatement District)** – Covering the northern portion of Tulare County. Contact the Visalia Office at (559) 732-8606 or visit online at: <https://www.deltamvcd.org>.
- **Tulare Mosquito Abatement District** – Covering the western portion of Tulare County. Contact the Tulare Office at (559) 686-6628 or visit online at: <https://www.tularemosquito.com>.
- **Delano Mosquito Abatement District** – Covering the southern portion of Tulare County. Contact the Delano Office at (661) 725-3114 or visit online at: <https://delanomosquito.com>.

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