



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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FIRST 2008 HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE REPORTED

News Availability Scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Today

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus (WNV) for 2008. A 24-year-old San Diego man was hospitalized with encephalitis, after developing symptoms consistent with WNV infection.

"We urge the public to take appropriate precautions to protect against contracting West Nile virus," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "Avoid outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are active, use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535."

Other precautions include not sleeping outside, unprotected, while camping; wearing long sleeves and pants; and ensuring that windows and doors have tight fitting screens without holes or tears.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms or become seriously ill. Nearly one in five who do fall ill may suffer from headache, fever, nausea, fatigue, skin rash or swollen glands. The risk of complications increases for those over age 50, and those who have weakened immune systems. In 2007, 15 people tested positive for locally-acquired WNV.

HHSA is working closely with the County Department of Environmental Health (DEH), which continues its WNV control activities to check for and eradicate possible sources of the virus in San Diego County. A total of 121 dead birds have tested positive for WNV this year, one horse has died and four positive mosquito pools have been identified.

"We need the public's help to find mosquito breeding sites throughout the county," said Gary Erbeck, Director, San Diego County Department of Environmental Health. "People should check their property weekly to eliminate any standing water sources, where mosquitoes can breed."

For more information or to report dead birds, please call the County's WNV information line toll free at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.

Editor's Note: A news availability is scheduled at 10:30 a.m. at 1700 Pacific Highway, San Diego.

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