



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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TWO NEW HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASES REPORTED

Both New Cases Contracted Locally

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports two more confirmed human cases of West Nile virus (WNV). Total 2008 cases to date are three.

One case is a 38-year-old Carlsbad woman who was hospitalized with meningitis after developing symptoms consistent with WNV infection. The other case is a 58-year-old Del Mar woman who was hospitalized with meningitis after developing symptoms consistent with WNV infection.

"The West Nile virus season here is starting early," said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed., Deputy County Public Health Officer. "In previous years, it started in August or September. This serves as an important reminder to the public to take the appropriate precautions to protect against contracting WNV." In 2007, 15 people tested positive for locally-acquired WNV with all illnesses diagnosed in late August, September and October. On July 22, a 24-year-old San Diego man was confirmed to have WNV infection.

Precautions include using insect repellent when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active; using insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535; not sleeping outside, unprotected, while camping; wearing long sleeves and pants; and ensuring screens on windows and doors fit tightly and have no holes or other damage.

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. If you suspect you have WNV, contact your healthcare provider. If you have no healthcare provider, go to a community clinic or call HHSA's Community Epidemiology Branch at (619) 515-6620.

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 154 dead birds and eight sentinel chickens have tested positive for WNV this year, one horse has died and five positive mosquito pools have been identified.

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.