



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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CONTACT: HHSA, Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239
Vector Control: Jack Miller, (858) 694-3595

WEST NILE CASE APPEARS NOT TO BE LOCALLY ACQUIRED

Source of Infection Most Likely in Los Angeles County Harbor Area

A man infected with West Nile virus (WNV) appears not to have contracted the infection in San Diego County, and is more likely to have been infected in the Los Angeles County Harbor area, the San Diego County Health and Human Services (HHSA) reported late today.

“Our investigation shows that the patient, who works in the L.A. County Harbor area, had been there for two consecutive weeks and developed symptoms 24 hours after returning to San Diego,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., Deputy Public Health Officer. “Symptoms develop between three and 14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.”

Wooten said the patient told his attending physician that he was bitten by mosquitoes while in the Harbor area. This information was not available until late this afternoon.

This development means that the patient is not San Diego County’s first locally acquired case of West Nile virus. In 2003, two patients found by the public health laboratory to be positive for West Nile also did not acquire the virus locally. Updates on the patient’s condition will not be available from HHSA.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals via mosquitoes, which become infected after feeding on infected birds. Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms, though a few will develop fever, skin rashes, headaches and body aches.

The public is warned to continue to guard against mosquito bites, and to stay indoors during peak biting hours (dusk and dawn), to wear long sleeves and pants, use insect repellent with DEET, keep screens in good repair, and remove sources of standing water on their property where mosquitoes may breed.

The San Diego County Department of Environment Health continues its surveillance, including testing dead birds, trapping mosquitoes and testing sentinel chickens. For more information on WNV, visit the County’s Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com. The public is encouraged to call Vector Control to report mosquito breeding or dead birds at (888) 551-INFO (4636).

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
1700 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 203 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2472