



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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FIVE NEW HUMAN CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS REPORTED *Public Urged to Guard Against Mosquito Bites*

The County of San Diego HHSA (Health and Human Services Agency) reports five locally acquired cases of West Nile virus (WNV). The patients include:

- 70-year-old San Diego woman diagnosed with meningitis
- 55-year-old San Diego woman diagnosed with encephalitis
- 81-year-old East County man diagnosed with possible encephalitis or meningitis
- 59-year-old East County man diagnosed with encephalitis
- 61-year-old East County woman diagnosed with meningitis

All were hospitalized, and four had underlying medical conditions.

“Adults over age 50 with chronic medical conditions are at greater risk of having severe illness if they contract WNV,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., San Diego County Public Health Officer. “We continue to emphasize the importance of taking precautions to guard against mosquito bites, as mosquitoes spread the disease.”

This brings the number of 2007 cases to eight, including one case acquired outside the county. Since 2003, San Diego County has had a total of 15 cases, including one locally-acquired case in 2006.

Although most people infected with WNV do not experience debilitating symptoms, about 20 percent of those infected can get West Nile fever. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, body aches, occasional skin rash on the trunk, and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of severe disease – which occur in one in 150 persons infected – include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, muscle weakness and paralysis. If you suspect you may be infected with WNV, contact your physician.

To prevent WNV infection, avoid outdoor activity at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active; use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus; remove all standing water from your property; and ensure that windows and doors have tight fitting screens without holes or tears.

A total of 88 birds and four horses have tested positive for WNV this year. “Backyard sources such as green swimming pools, ponds or fountains must not be allowed to become breeding sites for mosquitoes,” said Gary Erbeck, director, Department of Environmental Health (DEH). For more information or to report possible mosquito breeding sources, 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.

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