



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Oct. 3, 2007

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CONTINUED VIGILANCE NEEDED TO PROTECT AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS *HHSA Reports Seven New Human Cases of WNV*

Six new cases of locally acquired West Nile virus (WNV) and one non-locally-acquired case have been verified, the County of San Diego HHSA (Health and Human Services Agency) announced today:

- 8-year-old San Diego boy diagnosed with meningitis
- 58-year-old San Diego man diagnosed with febrile illness
- 85-year-old San Diego woman diagnosed with encephalitis
- 81-year-old San Diego woman diagnosed with encephalitis
- 70-year-old Lakeside man diagnosed with febrile illness
- 60-year-old Pine Valley man diagnosed with febrile illness (not locally acquired)
- 57-year-old La Mesa woman diagnosed with meningitis

“West Nile virus is a preventable disease. We urge the public to take steps to protect themselves against infection,” said Supervisor Ron Roberts, Chairman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors. “And, we encourage the media to continue disseminating the very important message about protection and prevention.”

“While those over age 50 with chronic diseases are more likely to develop serious complications, anyone, including children, can get West Nile virus,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H, San Diego County Public Health Officer. “Most people will never know they have it, but some may experience lasting effects.”

So far this year, there have been 15 cases of WNV in San Diego County, bringing the total since 2003 to 22 cases.

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.

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“We have found mosquitoes breeding in the backyards of the people who have contracted the virus,” said Gary Erbeck, director, Department of Environmental Health (DEH). “Residents must eliminate sources such as plant saucers, watering cans and buckets. Anything that can hold water should be dumped or removed.”

For more information or to report possible mosquito breeding sources, please call the County’s WNV information line at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County’s web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.

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