

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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POSITIVE BIRD CONFIRMED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS

A dead crow collected from the City of Yucaipa by the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health, Vector Control Program on June 2, 2005 has tested positive for West Nile Virus. These findings represent the first report of WNV activity in San Bernardino County since a chicken tested positive in early February in Ontario. The Vector Ecologist at the San Bernardino County Vector Control Lab performed the test using VecTest. This test allows for much quicker results than the previous method that could take up to two weeks for confirmation. VecTest supplies were purchased by utilizing money approved by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors last month.

San Bernardino County Vector Control Program is trapping for adult mosquitoes for virus testing purposes in the area where the bird was found. Staff will also be canvassing the area informing residents and looking for and identifying mosquito-breeding sources.

“We’ve been expecting and preparing for West Nile Virus this year.” States County Health Officer, Dr. Eric Frykman. “This infected bird is an indicator that the virus is here this year

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County Administrative Officer

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and serves as a reminder for everyone to take measures to protect themselves from mosquito bites.”

The San Bernardino County Vector Control Program have mosquito fish available for ponds or other residential water features, the mosquito fish eat mosquito larvae (immature mosquitoes). If you are within the San Bernardino County Vector Control program district you can call 909 388-4600 to arrange for mosquito fish pick up.

San Bernardino County experienced heavy rain this season. Combined with stagnant water and coming warmer weather, mosquito production is expected to be high this year, increasing the likelihood of early West Nile Virus (WNV) activity.

West Nile Virus is a disease primarily spread by mosquitoes among birds and incidentally to people, horses and other animals. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The majority of people who get infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Only a few will experience mild symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches. West Nile Virus infection, however, can cause severe disease in the elderly and individuals with lowered immune system. In 2004, there were 828 human infections of WNV reported in California counties, with 28 of those resulting in death. San Bernardino County reported 197 human cases, with five fatalities.

A comprehensive surveillance program to monitor for WNV in San Bernardino County has been established by the San Bernardino County Vector Control Program in collaboration with other state and local agencies.

The program includes testing suspect cases in humans and horses, collecting and testing mosquitoes, bleeding and testing sentinel chickens and evaluating dead birds.

County residents can better understand how to protect themselves from mosquitoes and West Nile Virus **by following the 5 Ds:**

- Drain or Dump...**Remove all standing water around your property where mosquitoes lay eggs such as birdbaths, green swimming pools, ponds, old tires, buckets, clogged gutters, or even puddles from leaky sprinklers.

- Dawn and Dusk...**Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active.

- Dress...**Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeved shirts that are loose fitting and light colored.

- DEET...**Apply insect repellent containing DEET according to manufacturer's directions.

- Doors...**Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes to prevent mosquitoes from entering home.

If you have questions or concerns or there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or you have standing water or green pools in your area call San Bernardino County Vector Control Program at 800-44-ABATE (800-442-2283) or 909-388-4600. If you are in the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Ontario, Montclair or Rancho Cucamonga call 909 627-0931 for

West Valley Vector Control District. You may also visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dehs/vectorcontrol or the California Health Services West Nile website at www.westnile.ca.gov for more information on Vector Control or West Nile Virus.