

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORT FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS-RELATED DEATH IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY FOR 2013

STOCKTON, CA (August 15, 2013) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services is reporting a case West Nile Virus (WNV) related death of an 83 year-old woman from Stockton. The last reported WNV - related death in San Joaquin County (SJC) was in 2007.

"We want to remind the public that although the risk of death from West Nile Virus is low, this unfortunate death reminds us that we must protect ourselves from mosquito bites to prevent West Nile Virus infection," Dr. Karen Furst, Health Officer said.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than 1 percent of those infected – will develop serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis.

Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms. Studies also show that those people with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greater risk for serious illness.

The most effective way for individuals to prevent exposure to mosquito bites and West Nile virus is to remember the "Four D's":

1. DEET – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions to keep mosquitoes from biting you. Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older (www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html).
2. DAWN AND DUSK – Mosquitoes that carry WNV tend to bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.

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3. DRESS – Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure to mosquito bites (i.e., long pants and long-sleeved shirts).
4. DRAIN – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including buckets, old car tires, and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae. Neglected swimming pools are also prime habitat for mosquito development. The San Joaquin County Mosquito Vector Control District is available to help with neglected pools in the prevention of mosquito development. To request District service, call 209-982-4675, 1-800-300-4675 or visit the District website at www.simosquito.org

California's West Nile virus website at www.westnile.ca.gov/ includes the latest information on West Nile virus activity in the state. Residents are encouraged to report all dead birds and dead tree squirrels on the website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

For additional information on West Nile Virus, visit the following websites:

- San Joaquin County Public Health Services www.sjcphs.org/emprep/WestNileVirus.aspx
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html

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