

CDPH Reports First Human West Nile Virus Fatalities This Summer

Date: 8/6/2014

Number: 14-069

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SACRAMENTO

The first two deaths this summer due to West Nile virus infection have been confirmed by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) it was announced today by Dr. Ron Chapman, CDPH Director and state public health officer. The first was a senior citizen from Sacramento County. The second was an adult from Shasta County.

"These unfortunate deaths remind us that we must protect ourselves from mosquito bites to prevent West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne infections," said Chapman. "West Nile virus activity is greatest during the summertime."

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans and animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than one percent – can develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis. People 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop complications. Recent data also indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness.

To date in 2014, West Nile virus has been detected in 36 California counties.

CDPH recommends that individuals prevent exposure to mosquito bites and West Nile virus by practicing the "Three Ds:"

1. DEET – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. DAWN AND DUSK – Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these times. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
3. DRAIN – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.

California's [West Nile virus website](#) includes the latest information on West Nile virus activity in the state. Californians 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).