



Public Health Administration

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Health Department Confirms First Human Cases of West Nile Virus

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – The first human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Butte County have been confirmed in three Chico residents. One infected adult has experienced a fever illness without complications, while the other two adults have suffered the more severe, neuroinvasive form of WNV illness. All three cases are separate and unrelated to each other. Butte County Public Health Department is currently investigating several additional cases and anticipates the number of human cases in the county will increase.

As of August 12, 2016, WNV activity has been detected in 35 of California's 58 counties, with 22 human cases confirmed statewide. In Butte County, 11 dead birds, 25 sentinel chickens, and 35 mosquito samples have tested positive for WNV this year.

People infected with WNV generally fall into three categories: no symptoms (7-8 out of 10 people infected), fever illness (1 in 5 people infected), and severe illness or neuroinvasive disease that can include encephalitis or meningitis (less than 1 in 150 people infected). For those who develop WNV neuroinvasive disease, recovery can take weeks or months, and some individuals will have long lasting impairments. Rarely, WNV can cause death.

WNV season typically lasts June through October in Butte County. The virus is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Residents should continue to reduce the risk of mosquito bites and WNV infection by practicing the "Three Ds":

1. DEET – Use a proven insect repellent like DEET. Other recommended repellents include: picaradin, lemon eucalyptus oil, para-menthane-diol, or IR3535. Always use according to label instructions. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. DAWN AND DUSK – The mosquitoes that carry WNV bite in the early morning and evening. Wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these times. Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep mosquitoes out. 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. For standing water, fountains, ponds, etc., consider adding "Mosquito Dunks" or mosquito fish, which feed on mosquito larvae. Report unmaintained swimming pools to the local Mosquito and Vector Control District at (530) 342-7350 or (530) 533-6038.

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For further information regarding this release, contact Lisa Almaguer, BCPHD Communications Manager.
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