



Public Health Administration

Cathy A. Raevsky, Director
Mark A. Lundberg, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer

202 Mira Loma Drive
Oroville, California 95965

T: 530.538.7581
F: 530.538.2164

buttecounty.net/publichealth

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West Nile Virus Claims One Life in Butte County

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – Butte County Public Health Department (BCPHD) has confirmed a death due to complications of West Nile Virus (WNV) infection. This marks the first human WNV death in 2015 in Butte County. The individual was a senior citizen who became ill in late August. The infection was confirmed in early September as WNV neuro-invasive disease, the most severe form of WNV.

As of September 23rd, 2015, 45 cases of WNV illness have been confirmed in Butte County, with 28 of the cases occurring in July. WNV has infected males and females in almost equal numbers. Although people 50 and older are at higher risk of WNV, nearly half of reported WNV cases in Butte County are in people ages 5-49 years. People age 60 and older experienced the most number of severe cases resulting in WNV neuro-invasive disease. It's important to note that children can also suffer from WNV neuro-invasive disease. Four children under the age of 18 experienced this severe form of the disease.

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 neuro-invasive disease that can include encephalitis or meningitis (less than 1 in 150 people infected). For those who develop WNV neuro-invasive disease, recovery can take weeks or months. Neuro-invasive disease is rarely fatal.

WNV season typically lasts through October. WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Residents should continue to reduce the risk of infection by practicing the “Three Ds”:

1. DEET – Use a proven insect repellent containing DEET, 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 – Mosquitoes that carry WNV bite in the early morning and evening. Wear protective 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.
(530) 538-6313 or lalmaguer@buttecounty.net