



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FIRST SIGN OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN COACHELLA VALLEY FOR 2013

Two sentinel chickens tested positive for West Nile virus in the East Valley

INDIO, CA, JULY 3, 2013: The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District (CVMVCD) detected West Nile virus (WNV) in blood samples from two sentinel chickens in Eastern Coachella Valley. This is the first indication of WNV transmission in the Valley this year. The sentinel chickens which tested positive were from a sentinel flock near 70th Avenue and Lincoln St., just north of the Salton Sea. Blood samples from the sentinel chickens were taken June 24 and tested in a California Department of Public Health (CDPH) lab.

“With many families getting ready to celebrate the 4th of July, we want to remind people to protect themselves from mosquitoes while they are out having fun,” says District Vector Ecologist, Gregory S. White, PhD. “Whether at a barbecue or out watching the fireworks, cover exposed parts of your body and wear repellent. It only takes one bite from one infected mosquito to transmit the virus.”

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals, including sentinel chickens, through the bite of an infected mosquito. CVMVCD keeps sentinel chicken coops across the Valley to help detect the presence, intensity, and duration of transmission of mosquito-borne diseases in the area. Sentinel chickens *do not get sick* and are *not capable of transmitting the virus* to other mosquitoes. Mosquitoes acquire WNV by feeding on infected birds.

Statewide, WNV has been detected in 24 counties, including, one human case, 89 positive dead birds, 124 positive mosquito samples, three chickens, and one squirrel.

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No human cases have been detected in Riverside County. District staff will intensify mosquito surveillance and control efforts in the areas surrounding the site of the infected chickens. Residents can also take an active role in reducing the threat of WNV in their neighborhoods by taking the following steps:

Protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- **Apply Insect Repellent.** Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Lemon eucalyptus oil should not be used on children under three years of age.
- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours.** Dawn and dusk are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities during that time.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places for mosquitoes to breed by draining/discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools. Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls at least weekly.
- **Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Others will have only mild symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches. However, young children, the elderly, or individuals with lowered immune systems are at greater risk of experiencing more severe symptoms when infected. Anyone with symptoms should contact their health care provider.

Please contact the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District at (760) 342-8287 or (888) 343-9399 to report mosquito problems, request mosquitofish, and report neglected pools or standing water where mosquitoes breed. Visit us online at www.cvmvcd.org to obtain more information and submit service requests.

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