



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 5, 2018

ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS DETECTED IN MECCA MOSQUITOES

District conducting barrier sprays targeting adult mosquitoes; stepping up surveillance and outreach

INDIO, CA, JULY 5, 2018: St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV) has been detected in mosquitoes collected in three different traps in Mecca near Johnson Street and 70th Avenue and Colfax and 71st Avenue. This is the first detection of St. Louis encephalitis virus in the Coachella Valley for 2018. Five samples of mosquitoes tested positive for West Nile virus in Indian Wells and Palm Desert last month.

Last year at this time the District had detected 48 WNV-positive mosquito samples and no SLEV-positive mosquito samples. The samples of mosquitoes were all tested at the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District laboratory.

“With two mosquito-borne viruses currently active in the Coachella Valley, it is more important than ever for people to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Jill Oviatt, District Public Information Manager said. “Just one bite from an infected mosquito could change your future. Don’t take the chance. Make sure you are covered up in the early morning and evening hours when mosquitoes that can transmit these viruses typically bite.”

In an effort to reduce the number of mosquitoes, interrupt virus transmission, and protect the public from mosquito-borne diseases, District staff will post disease notification signs near the trap locations where the infected mosquitoes were collected, as well as intensify mosquito surveillance, larval and adult control as necessary in the surrounding area, barrier treatments to target adult mosquitoes, and outreach to businesses and residents in the area.

WNV and SLEV are transmitted to people via the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are infected when they feed on birds carrying the virus. Most individuals infected with WNV or SLEV will not experience any illness. Others will have flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches.

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In severe cases, people will need to be hospitalized, and in rare cases the disease can be fatal. Young children, the elderly, or individuals with lowered immune systems are at greater risk of experiencing severe symptoms when infected. Anyone with symptoms should contact their health care provider. The best way to prevent getting infected is to prevent mosquito bites.

Prevent mosquito bites:

- Avoid going outside in the hours around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes that can transmit West Nile and St. Louis encephalitis viruses are most active.
- Wear EPA registered ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and/or clothing (as directed on the product label).
- Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks, and shoes when mosquitoes are active.
- Be sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

Community commitment to removing standing water sources both inside and outside the home is critical to controlling mosquitoes in the Coachella Valley.

Prevent mosquitoes around your home:

- Inspect yards for standing water sources and drain water that may have collected under potted plants, in bird baths, discarded tires, and any other items that could collect water.
- Check your rain gutters and lawn drains to make sure they aren't holding water and debris.
- Clean and scrub bird baths and pet watering dishes weekly.
- Check and clean any new potted plant containers that you bring home because they may have eggs. Some mosquito eggs can remain viable in dry areas for months.

Please contact the District at (760) 342-8287 to report mosquito problems, request mosquitofish, and report neglected pools or standing water where mosquitoes breed. Dead birds should be reported to the Californian Department of Public Health at (877) 968-2473 or online at http://westnile.ca.gov/report_wnv.php. Visit us online at www.cvmvcd.org to obtain more information and submit service requests. For the latest statewide statistics for WNV activity, please visit <http://westnile.ca.gov>.

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