



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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WEST NILE VIRUS IN THERMAL; ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS IN MECCA

Mosquito-borne virus activity intensifies in the East Valley, truck-mounted control planned in Mecca.

INDIO, CA, JULY 25, 2018: The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District detected West Nile virus (WNV) activity for the first time in Thermal in 2018 and continued activity of St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV) in Mecca. Mosquitoes trapped in downtown Mecca tested positive for SLEV, the first mosquito-borne virus activity detected in an East Valley residential community this year.

In Mecca, mosquitoes collected from a trap near Lincoln Street and 65th Avenue and from a trap near Colfax Street and 72nd Avenue tested positive for SLEV. The mosquitoes that tested positive for WNV came from a trap in Thermal near Pierce Street and Avenue 70.

This brings the number of WNV-positive mosquito samples to 11 and the number of SLEV-positive mosquito samples to 11 for 2018. Last year at this time the District had detected 69 WNV-positive mosquito samples and no SLEV-positive mosquito samples. All mosquitoes were tested at the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District laboratory.

“With the oppressive temperatures we are experiencing, it is likely that people will be outdoors in the early morning or evening, enjoying a little respite from the heat,” said Jill Oviatt, Public Information Manager at the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District. “This is exactly when virus-carrying mosquitoes are looking to bite a warm-blooded animal, like us. We ask everyone to take proper precautions and cover up or wear repellent to reduce the risk of getting bitten by an infected mosquito and developing a potentially serious disease.”

In an effort to reduce the number of mosquitoes, interrupt virus transmission, and protect the public from mosquito-borne diseases, District staff will conduct truck-mounted adult mosquito control applications in downtown Mecca where the virus activity was detected.

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Applications will be conducted in the area bordered by Johnson Street, 66th Avenue, Lincoln Street, and 62nd Avenue, and exclude organic farms. Applications are scheduled Saturday through Monday, July 28-30, between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., weather permitting. A route map and additional information about the applications, including any revised application dates are available at www.cvmvcd.org/controlactivities.htm.

In addition, District staff will post disease notification signs in communities located near the trap locations and intensify mosquito surveillance with an increase in traps and inspections for mosquito breeding sites. Technicians will carry out larval and adult control as necessary in the surrounding area in an effort to reduce the number of mosquitoes and interrupt further transmission of the virus. Public Outreach staff will be distributing protection and prevention educational materials and mosquito repellent to local community centers, businesses, residents, and clinics.

WNV and SLEV are transmitted to people via the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are infected when they bite birds with the virus. Most infected people will have no symptoms; others develop fever, headaches, and body aches; hospitalization is required in some cases, and in rare cases the disease is 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.

All control products used by the District are registered by the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of controlling mosquitoes and protecting public health. The products are applied according to label instructions by trained and certified technicians. Although the products pose low risk, people can avoid exposure by staying inside during and for 30 minutes following the application.

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.
- Maintain window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

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.

Please contact the District at (760) 342-8287 to report mosquito problems, request mosquitofish, and report neglected pools or standing water where mosquitoes breed. Report dead birds to the California Department of Public Health at (877) 968-2473, or submit a report online at <http://westnile.ca.gov>. Visit us online at www.cvmvcd.org to obtain more information.

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