

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 7, 2016

**WEST NILE VIRUS STILL ACTIVE IN LAKE COUNTY**  
***First Lake County human case confirmed***

LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA – With new detections of West Nile Virus (WNV) in sentinel chicken flocks, local officials wish to remind those who spend time outdoors that it is still important to prevent mosquito bites. People can become infected with WNV when bitten by a mosquito after it has bitten an infected bird, the reservoir for the virus.

Lake County Public Health has received confirmation of its first human case, who contracted the infection in late July.

Lake County Vector Control District conducts routine surveillance for WNV throughout the active season. Positive detections typically occur in mosquitoes, followed by dead birds and sentinel chicken flocks. Recently, two sentinel chickens tested positive, bringing the total to four for the year. Additionally, 32 mosquito samples and three dead birds in Lake County have tested positive for West Nile virus. According to Jamesina Scott, Ph.D., District Manager and Research Director, “Finding WNV in sentinel chickens shows that there is risk for people to get WNV from the mosquitoes that are biting now.”

Dr. Scott recommends that residents inspect their yards for sources of standing water where mosquitoes develop, such as ornamental ponds, wading pools, and unmaintained swimming pools. “Getting rid of standing water in your yard prevents mosquitoes from growing there and protects you, your family, and your neighbors from mosquito bites and the diseases they carry.”

Symptoms of the mild form of WNV include fever, headache, body aches, nausea vomiting, and occasionally swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. While the illness may last only a few days, some people report being sick for several weeks. The severe form of West Nile, which occurs in less than 1% of cases, can affect the nervous system and can be fatal.

It only takes one bite to get West Nile virus from an infected mosquito, and anyone of any age can get this disease. Contracting the virus is largely preventable by taking simple, but very important precautions.

- Dump or drain standing water. Mosquitoes can't begin their lives without water. If the water cannot be drained (like an unused swimming pool), call the LCVCD at (707) 263-4770 for free mosquito fish.
- Defend yourself against mosquitoes by using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. For more information about effective mosquito repellents, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html>
- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present, typically dawn and dusk.
- Report neglected swimming pools by calling 263-4770 or visiting [www.lcvcd.org](http://www.lcvcd.org). Anonymous calls are accepted. Just one neglected pool can produce more than one million mosquitoes and affect people up to five miles away.

As of August 31, 2016, 123 human cases of WNV were reported from 23 California Counties, an increase from the 97 cases reported at the same time last year. Forty-six of current cases were reported in the past week. Two WNV-related fatalities were reported this year by Sacramento and Yolo Counties.

According to Dr. Karen Tait, Lake County's Health Officer, "All indications are that WNV season is in full swing. Since there is no specific treatment for the virus, the best approach is to avoid exposure to mosquito bites."

Dr. Scott explains that local WNV activity often continues into September and October. "The risk of picking up West Nile virus from a mosquito bite is highest now because the mosquitoes are older—they've fed several times and have had more chances to pick up West Nile virus and pass it along to the next host they bite" explained Scott.

"People want to know what the 'best' repellent is," said Scott. "The best repellent is the one that you will use, and there are several good choices now available as sprays, lotions, or wipes." The US EPA has registered five different active ingredients in mosquito repellents that are proven effective: DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, IR3535, and para-menthane-diol (a synthetic version of oil of lemon eucalyptus). These five ingredients are proven to be effective and safe Scott explained. "But they only work if you apply them. And always read the label and follow the directions."

Residents can contact the Lake County Vector Control District at (707) 263-4770 from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday or online at [www.LCVCD.org](http://www.LCVCD.org) to request help for mosquito problems, report neglected pools and other mosquito sources, or for information about mosquitoes, ticks, and other vectors and the disease they transmit.

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