



PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE - West Nile Virus

July 10, 2009

The Southern Nevada Health District's vector control program has detected West Nile virus in mosquito clusters in the 89103, 89107, 89011 and 89122 zip codes; previously, the vector control program detected West Nile virus in a cluster of mosquitoes in the 89119 zip code. It is important to note that although West Nile positive mosquitoes have been identified in these five Southern Nevada zip codes, residents throughout the area are urged to take precautions to prevent mosquito breeding and to prevent mosquito bites. West Nile is present throughout the Valley and any one location is not at a higher or lower risk than another.

The health district recently reported Clark County's first human case associated with West Nile virus for 2009. The patient, a 61-year-old woman, contracted the mild form of the illness, West Nile fever. In 2008, Nevada had 16 reported human cases of West Nile virus.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person.

The health district's environmental health specialists routinely survey and treat known breeding sources for mosquitoes and trap them for identification. In addition, they are tested for West Nile virus, Western equine encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis. West Nile virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person.

The health district strongly stresses the need for individual protective actions to avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) according to manufacturer's directions. *Repellents containing picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus also have some efficacy. However, DEET is the best-studied and most-effective repellent available.*
- Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, when outdoors.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, notably at dusk (the first two hours after sunset) and dawn.
- Eliminate areas of standing water, including bird baths, "green" swimming pools and sprinkler runoff, which support mosquito breeding.

Further updates will be posted to the Southern Nevada Health District website, www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org.