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Public Health West Nile Virus Advisory

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SITUATIONAL UPDATE

West Nile Virus (WNV) activity has been detected in Riverside County. A positive mosquito pool has been identified in one of our Desert communities. In addition, positive dead birds have been found in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and Sacramento Counties. Currently there are no human or equine cases in the State. In 2011, Riverside County had seven (7) confirmed human cases of WNV. No equine cases were identified last year.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS

The diagnosis of WNV infection is based on a high index of clinical suspicion and specific laboratory tests. We highly recommend that clinicians test for WNV whenever there is a history of unexplained encephalitis, meningitis or unexplained febrile illness lasting 7 days or more; especially if the fever is accompanied by a headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes, eye pain and nausea or vomiting.

What specimens are needed?

- Acute serum specimen (≥ 2 cc) and,
- If a lumbar puncture is performed, 1-2 cc of cerebrospinal fluid is required for testing.

Why test? Testing differentiates WNV from other conditions (enterovirus, other arboviral diseases). Testing results offer anticipatory guidance--both WNV neuroinvasive disease and WNV fever patients can have lingering symptoms and knowing the underlying etiology is helpful for the patient and family members.

Prevention

It is important to educate patients about preventive measures.

- **DRAIN:** Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Young mosquitoes grow in the water. Get rid of standing water around the home. Empty water out of buckets, old tires, flower pots, and toys.
- **DEFEND:** Use an EPA-registered insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus in it. Put the repellent on your skin that is not covered by clothes. Follow the directions carefully.
- **DUSK and DAWN:** Mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus bite in the early morning and early evening hours, and sometimes throughout the night. When outside in the early morning or evening hours, wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt.

West Nile Virus cases are reportable to Riverside County Department of Public Health. Please fax reports to (951) 358-5102. For questions regarding reporting or testing of suspect cases, please contact Disease Control at (951) 358-5107.