



COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS ACTIVITY INCREASING IN ORANGE COUNTY

(Santa Ana) - West Nile Virus (WNV) activity is increasing in Orange County, with a total of six human WNV infections reported through September 6. Included in the total are 3 probable cases and 3 confirmed cases, including 2 positive blood donors who did not develop symptoms. Most of these cases experienced an onset of symptoms in mid- to late August, indicating a recent increase in activity.

County Health officials say that in previous years WNV infections have been reported through the end of October. “West Nile Virus is a serious disease that is largely preventable by taking basic precautions,” said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “While we should begin to see a decrease in West Nile Virus activity as temperatures cool, it is important to continue to take active steps to prevent mosquito bites and reduce the risk of West Nile Virus infection.”

High temperatures may mean that people are sleeping with doors and windows open, making it especially important to ensure that all door and window screens are in good repair.

Additional WNV precautions include:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District's website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

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