



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Mosquito Abatement Efforts Underway in Stanislaus County

The California State Legislature has declared the week of April 19th as "West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week". Stanislaus County health officials have announced mosquito surveillance and control activities have been initiated by Eastside Mosquito Abatement District and Turlock Mosquito Abatement District. Residents are urged to play their part by eliminating standing water on their property and informing their local mosquito abatement district if they are being bitten by mosquitoes. West Nile virus has already been detected within California this year, most notably in neighboring Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, along with Los Angeles County.

"The mild winter weather in 2014 allowed mosquitoes and virus to have a head start in becoming established. With similar conditions this past winter, we are concerned 2015 could be another year with high West Nile Virus activity," said David Heft, General Manager of the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District. "We need the public to help by dumping out any standing water and reporting neglected swimming pools to their district."

In 2014, there were (38) individuals diagnosed with the neuro-invasive form of West Nile virus (WNV) and (2) fatalities within Stanislaus County. In California, there were (31) fatalities and (561) cases of the neuro-invasive form of the disease. According to CDPH, the number of fatal WNV cases in 2014 exceeded previous years in California.

"It was a record-breaking year for West Nile virus activity in 2014," California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith announced.

To aid in the detection of mosquito breeding, the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District has just completed an aerial survey targeting neglected swimming pools and other sources of backyard mosquito-breeding. District staff is busy inspecting hundreds of swimming pools that can produce mosquitoes which transmit West Nile virus. With warmer temperatures, conditions can change rapidly; so, the public is asked to continue to report neglected pools or any other mosquito-breeding activity.

In addition, residents are also urged to continue to report dead birds to the West Nile Virus state hotline: 1-877-968-2473. Reports may also be made online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Dead bird reports are an important tool for West Nile virus detection, even if the bird is not picked up and tested. Lack of dead bird reports decreases the ability to detect higher risk locations.

Residents are urged to help reduce their risk of contracting mosquito-borne diseases by following these guidelines:

- **Dump or drain** standing water. Mosquitoes can't begin their life without water.
- **Defend** yourself against mosquitoes using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present, typically **Dawn** and **Dusk**.
- **Report neglected swimming pools** by calling your local mosquito abatement district.
Anonymous calls accepted.

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