

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

Health Officer
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor
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HEALTH ADVISORY: West Nile in Santa Clara County and California

DATE: August 1, 2014

TO: Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control, Hospitals, and Clinics

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Health Officer

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Communicable Disease Controller

Two probable cases of West Nile were reported this week to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. Both patients were over the age of 75 years and hospitalized; one had encephalitis and the other had an uncomplicated febrile illness. If confirmed, these cases will represent the 20th and 21st human cases of West Nile reported in California. Additionally, a blood donor in Santa Clara County was found to be viremic in early July, which was the 6th asymptomatic case of West Nile reported in the state.

This year, Santa Clara County has had an unusually large number of dead birds positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). Half (496) of the 1014 dead birds infected with WNV reported in California were from Santa Clara County; and 82% of the dead birds tested in Santa Clara County this year were infected with WNV. Therefore, the risk of West Nile in Santa Clara County is likely substantially higher this summer than in previous years.

Clinicians should keep in mind:

1. Symptoms

- Incubation period ranges from 3 to 14 days (but is usually less than 7 days)
- Common symptoms: fever (often low grade), headache, myalgia, generalized weakness, rash
- Neuroinvasive disease (<1% of WNV infections) includes meningitis and encephalitis
- Risk factors for severe disease include age >50 years, immunosuppression, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or other underlying medical conditions

2. Diagnosis

- Test all patients for WNV with unexplained encephalitis, meningitis, or acute flaccid paralysis
- Consider testing patients with fever and compatible symptoms, especially during July–October
- Send for IgM antibody in CSF and/or serum (ideally using paired serum specimens)

3. Prevention

- WNV is transmitted by nighttime mosquitoes, especially around dawn and dusk
- Encourage patients to dump or remove standing water around the home, use insect repellent containing DEET, and wear long sleeves and pants

4. Report suspected cases to SCCPHD within one day by phone **408-885-4214** (press 1, then 3) or by faxed CMR (<http://www.sccgov.org/sites/sccphd/en-us/FindForms/Pages/DRForms.aspx>)

For more information about West Nile clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/healthCareProviders>. For information about West Nile case counts in humans, birds, and mosquitoes in California, visit <http://www.westnile.ca.gov>. For information about timing and location of fogging in Santa Clara County, visit the SCC Vector Control District at <http://www.sccgov.org/sites/vector>.

Health ALERT: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health ADVISORY: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health UPDATE: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.