



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDPH Confirms First Two Human West Nile Virus Deaths of 2018

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced today two confirmed deaths in California due to West Nile virus (WNV). The deceased persons were residents of Glenn county and Yuba county.

“We are still in a peak period of West Nile virus transmission in the state so we urge everyone to take every possible precaution to protect themselves against mosquito bites,” said CDPH Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith.

As of September 7, CDPH has reported 56 human cases of WNV from 21 California counties this year. Additionally, 422 dead birds from 18 counties have tested positive for WNV in 2018, and 1,606 mosquito samples from 28 counties have also tested positive for WNV this year.

West Nile virus is influenced by many factors, including climate, the number and types of birds and mosquitoes in an area, and the level of WNV immunity in birds. West Nile virus is transmitted to humans and animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than one percent – can develop serious neurologic illnesses such as encephalitis or meningitis.

People 60 years of age and older and individuals with diabetes or hypertension have a higher chance of getting sick, and are more likely to develop complications.

CDPH recommends that individuals protect against mosquito bites and WNV by practicing the “Three Ds”:

1. **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. Insect repellents should not be used on children under two months of age.
2. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes that transmit West Nile Virus usually bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these times. Make sure your doors and windows have tight-

fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

3. DRAIN – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property by emptying flower pots, old car tires, buckets, and other containers. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.

[California's West Nile virus website](#) includes the latest information on WNV activity in the state. Californians are encouraged to report dead birds on the website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

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