



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS FIND ADDITIONAL MOSQUITO POOLS POSITIVE FOR ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS AND WEST NILE VIRUS**

*Individuals are encouraged to use personal protection and to eliminate mosquito breeding sources.*

IMPERIAL COUNTY- The Imperial County Public Health Department announced today that three additional mosquito pools have tested positive for Saint Louis Encephalitis (SLE) and West Nile Virus (WNV) locally. The mosquito pools were collected in the city of El Centro, near West Main and in the area of Noffsinger Road in Niland. The samples were collected between July 20<sup>th</sup> through July 21<sup>st</sup> and results were received July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Locations in Brawley and Imperial that had previously tested positive are now negative. So far this year, there have been no confirmed cases of human infection from either of the viruses in Imperial County.

“As temperatures increase, so do mosquito populations and disease risk, which poses a serious public health threat in our communities,” stated Stephen Munday, M.D., Health Officer. “With many residents at home right now under stay-at-home orders, it’s a good time to check around properties and yards for mosquito breeding sources.”

The Public Health Department’s Vector Control Program has approximately 28 mosquito traps placed in strategic areas throughout the county, mostly within city limits. The traps are checked several times a week and mosquito pools are collected weekly. Our agency will continue monitoring disease activity and treat affected areas,” said Jeff Lamoure, Deputy Director of Environmental Health. “Although the positive mosquitoes have been collected in limited areas, all county residents should take precautions, like wearing insect repellent and minimizing outdoor activity at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.”

Symptoms of Saint Louis Encephalitis (SLE) include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, and tiredness. Severe neuroinvasive disease (often involving encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain) is more common in older adults. There are no vaccines to prevent nor medications to treat SLE. Most individuals infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Others will have only mild symptoms, such as fever, headache, and body aches. However, WNV can be severe in the elderly and individuals with lowered compromised immune systems. Severe symptoms of WNV include fever, nausea, vomiting, and seizures.

Both SLE and WNV are transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Individuals can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by taking the following precautions:

- Limit time outdoors during dawn and early evening.
- When outdoors, wear loose-fitting, light-colored, long-sleeve shirts and pants when mosquitoes are most active (during dusk and dawn).
- Apply insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions to prevent mosquito bites.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding by:
  - Draining or eliminating, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, toys, or any other container where mosquitos can breed.
  - Emptying and changing the water in birdbaths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels, and potted plant trays at least once a week to destroy potential mosquito habitats.
  - Draining or filling temporary pools of water with dirt.
  - Keeping swimming pool water treated and circulating.
- Contact Vector Control if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

If you think you or anyone in your household has symptoms that are causing you concern, contact your healthcare provider.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a useful search tool that the public can use to find the repellent products most appropriate for them and their families. The tool is available at <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>

For general information about WNV or to report a problem with mosquitoes in Imperial County please contact Environmental Health at (442) 265-1888. For information about WNV, visit <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/> or <http://www.icphd.org/environmental-health/bee---mosquitoes/west-nile-virus/>. For additional information related to Saint Louis Encephalitis, please visit the California Department of Public Health Department's website: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/SLE.aspx>.

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