

MOSQUITO BORNE ENCEPHALITIS WEST NILE VIRUS, ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS AND WESTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALOMYELITIS

The annual mosquito-borne encephalitis surveillance program traditionally begins in May. This is a reminder of the need for prompt and early recognition and reporting of human cases of St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (WEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV). Riverside County reported 116 West Nile Virus infections in 2004, with 2 deaths. It will be important to monitor for early signs of activity in 2005.

As in past years, it is hoped that surveillance for equine cases of WEE, monitoring of mosquito populations, laboratory testing of mosquitoes for SLE, WEE, and WNV viruses, and regular testing of sentinel chickens for antibody conversions will help give early warning of virus activity. These activities will provide an opportunity for local mosquito abatement agencies to implement and focus their control programs in the most critical regions of the County. Despite these sentinel surveillance systems, human cases are sometimes the first warning that virus activity has reached a critical threshold and pose an epidemic threat.

Testing for Anti-SLE, Anti-WEE, and Anti-WNV IgM will be done by the Riverside County Public Health Laboratory. Specific questions related to submission of specimens can be directed to the Department of Public Health Laboratory Manager, Janna Troy at 951-358-5070. Suspect cases should be reported to Disease Control 951-358-5107 or Faxed to 951-358-5102.