

**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE  
COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
DISEASE CONTROL BRANCH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER ANNOUNCES FIRST  
CONFIRMED HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN THE COUNTY THIS YEAR**

A youth in the Banning area has been infected with West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first confirmed human case in Riverside County for 2005, announced Dr. Gary Feldman, Public Health Officer for Riverside County. The individual was hospitalized but has been discharged and is recovering at home.

Tests conducted by the Public Health Laboratory in Riverside County and the California Department of Health Services' Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory in Richmond confirmed the WNV result.

With positive findings from surveillance testing and the first confirmed human case of West Nile Virus this year in Riverside County, the public is encouraged to take precautions to protect themselves, Feldman said.

So far this year, WNV has been detected in 34 of California's 58 counties in 258 dead birds, 41 mosquitoes, four sentinel chickens and three horses. In 2004, a total of 830 human WNV infections, including 28 deaths, were reported in California, 2 of these deaths occurred in Riverside County.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Health officials emphasized that the risk of serious illness to humans is low. Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Elderly individuals and those with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk for serious illness.

Individuals can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by taking these precautions:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.

- When outdoors, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing.
- Apply insect repellent according to label instructions.
- 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.
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

A comprehensive surveillance program to monitor for WNV in Riverside County has been established by the Department of Environmental Health Vector Control, local mosquito and vector control districts and other state and local agencies. The program includes testing suspect cases in humans and horses, capturing and testing mosquitoes, testing sentinel chickens and evaluating dead birds.

Anyone who becomes ill after exposure to mosquitoes should contact their health care provider. The Disease Control Office can be reached at (951) 358-5107, for more information on West Nile Virus.

Information about WNV is available on the WEB site established for surveillance in California: <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/> Dead birds can be reported on the Web site or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).

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