



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

P.O. Box 3271, Modesto, CA 95353
Fax: (209) 558-8320
www.schsa.org

NUMBER: 22-04
FOR RELEASE: Immediate

DATE: July 13, 2022
Health Services Agency Contact: Kamlesh Kaur
PHONE: (209) 558-6833
East Side Mosquito Abatement District Contact: Dr. Wakoli Wekesa
PHONE: (209) 552-4098
Turlock Mosquito Abatement District Contact: David Heft
PHONE: (209) 634-1234

**FIRST HUMAN CASE OF ST. LOUIS ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS (SLEV)
IN STANISLAUS COUNTY**

Stanislaus County - Stanislaus County Public Health has confirmed the first human St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV) infection in the county for the 2022 year in an adult male with neurologic illness. As with West Nile Virus (WNV), SLEV is transmitted through the bite of a virus-infected mosquito. As of July 8, 2022, the local mosquito abatement districts had not detected environmental activity of either SLEV or WNV in Stanislaus County this year.

While SLEV is less common in California than WNV, it can cause similar symptoms. Most people infected with WNV or SLEV do not have noticeable symptoms and likely will not know that they have been infected. Some people may develop mild symptoms, including fever, headache, and fatigue. Although rare, both WNV and SLEV can cause serious neurologic illness, such as encephalitis or meningitis, which can lead to long-term disability or death. Certain populations, such as older adults, people with diabetes, and people with weakened immune systems, are more likely to develop serious illness when infected with WNV or SLEV.

There are no vaccines to prevent infection nor any medications to treat either SLEV or WNV. Community members are recommended to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites outdoors. "During the warmer months when mosquito activity increases, and people spend more time outdoors, it is important to protect ourselves from mosquito bites to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses," says Dr. Thea Papasozomenos, Stanislaus County Assistant Public Health Officer.

"Residents are advised to report any standing water, including neglected swimming pools, and dead birds to the mosquito abatement districts," advises Dr. Wakoli Wekesa, East Side Mosquito Abatement District Manager. "Wearing mosquito repellent, long pants, and long-sleeved shirt when outdoors in evening hours can reduce the mosquito bites."

- CONTINUED-

To reduce the risk of being infected with SLEV and other mosquito-borne viruses, the following actions are recommended:

1. **Drain** - Mosquitoes breed in water. Prevent mosquitoes from breeding by removing stagnant water from items around your property, such as tin cans, plastic containers, flowerpots, discarded tires, roof gutters, and downspouts.
2. **Dress** - Wear lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and long pants while outdoors. Spray clothing with insect repellent since mosquitoes may bite through clothing.
3. **Defend** - Apply an insect repellent with DEET to exposed skin and clothing according to its label.
4. **Dawn/Dusk** - Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

For additional information or to request service, residents should contact their local mosquito abatement district. Stanislaus County residents:

North of the Tuolumne, contact: Eastside Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 522-4098
(www.eastsidemosquito.com)

South of the Tuolumne River, contact: Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 634-1243
(www.turlockmosquito.org)

###