

San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District



News Release

Aaron Devencenzi
Information Officer
(209) 982-4675
(209) 982-0120 Fax

For Immediate Release

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Community Effort Needed to Reduce Risk of West Nile Virus

-District Increases Surveillance Efforts-

(STOCKTON, CA) – With warmer weather on the horizon, its time for residents to make routine inspections of their property and remove standing water where mosquitoes develop. “As temperatures rise, mosquitoes can develop within about seven days. Residents can play a huge role in reducing their risk of West Nile virus (WNV) by simply removing standing water,” said Aaron Devencenzi, spokesman for the San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District (District). The District recommends the following to be inspected: old tires, containers including buckets, wheelbarrows, boats, canoes, flower pots, wagons and toys. Clogged rain gutters, neglected swimming pools, hot tubs, and ornamental ponds can be problematic. The District encourages the public to call for options available in eliminating mosquito development in these situations. With spring already upon us, the District is also increasing disease surveillance.

Today, the District is placing fifty chickens to be used as sentinels for disease surveillance. The birds will be located in five areas around San Joaquin County. When these birds are bitten by a mosquito infected with various mosquito-borne diseases including WNV, they develop antibodies to the virus. The District therefore takes blood samples biweekly from March through November, checking for these antibodies. In conjunction with other forms of disease surveillance, the sentinel chickens can act as an early warning indicator. The District will continue to monitor for mosquito-borne diseases throughout the year and will take all necessary actions to reduce mosquito populations.

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

- Apply insect repellent containing the active ingredient DEET when outdoors, according to label instructions.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, at dawn and dusk, and especially for the first two hours after sunset.
- When outdoors, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing.
- Exclude mosquitoes from your home with tight fitting screens on doors and windows.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding.
- Contact your veterinarian for information on vaccinating equine against WNV.
- Report significant mosquito infestations to San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District at 209-982-4675 or 1-800-300-4675.

In 2005, there were 36 human cases, 19 horse cases, 38 groups of mosquitoes, and six flocks of sentinel chickens that have tested positive for WNV in San Joaquin County.

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For more information about West Nile virus:

- Report mosquito problems to:
SJC Mosquito & Vector Control District at (209) 982-4675 or 1-800-300-4675
- San Joaquin County recorded information line: (209) 469-8200
- San Joaquin County WNV website: www.sjgov.org/oes
- Report dead birds to 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or www.westnile.ca.gov. (Statewide information can also be obtained)

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