



**Los Angeles County West Vector  
& Vector-Borne Disease Control District**  
6750 Centinela Avenue, Culver City CA 90230  
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## **West Nile Virus Update** **&** **Public Health Advisory**

**September 13, 2012**

This is a West Nile Virus (WNV) update and public health advisory for all cities and unincorporated county areas within the Los Angeles County West Vector & Vector-Borne Disease Control District.

The West Nile virus has been particularly active throughout the United States and now, because of persistent hot weather and high humidity, monitoring data indicates that Los Angeles County has made a significant jump in positive dead birds and tested mosquitoes in 2012 compared to 2011. Although human cases in Los Angeles County are down from 63 in 2011 to only 18 in 2012, extra care should be taken by all residents to reduce their exposure and the likelihood of contracting WNV by following the recommendations listed.

**Nationwide (Infections are Up ↑ from 2011):** As of September 11, 2012, 48 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes. A total of 2,636 cases of West Nile virus disease in people, including 118 deaths, have been reported to CDC. Of these, 1,405 (53%) were classified as neuroinvasive disease (such as meningitis or encephalitis) and 1,231 (47%) were classified as non-neuroinvasive disease.

The 2,636 cases reported thus far in 2012 is the highest number of West Nile virus disease cases reported to CDC through the second week in September since 2003. Two thirds of the cases have been reported from six states (Texas, Louisiana, South Dakota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Oklahoma) and 40 percent of all cases have been reported from Texas.

**California (Infections are Up ↑ from 2011):** Human infections in California for 2012 are up 92% with 2 deaths and 99 cases statewide compared to only 44 cases at the same time last year.

**LA County (Infections are Down ↓ from 2011):** Human infections for 2012 (18 cases) are down by 72% in Los Angeles County compared to 2011 (63 cases and 4 deaths). At this time last year (2011), there were 93 positive zip codes with positive dead birds, sentinels chicken flocks, mosquitoes, or dead squirrels. This year (2012), there is presently 101 positive zip codes.

However, positive zip codes in the Los Angeles County West Vector & Vector-Borne Disease Control District are up from last year's total count of 17 to 23 for the same period due primarily to the unusually hot and persistent temperatures and humidity along the coastline and adjacent coastal communities.

**Positive Birds:** Eighty-one percent (81%) of all of the positive indicators (dead birds, sentinels chicken flocks, mosquitoes, and dead squirrels) are dead birds. Birds routinely travel many miles from their nighttime nesting locations to feed and scavenge during the day before they return to their original location in the evening. Although positive birds collected in a specific area are significant with respect to trends on a wider basis, it does not definitively identify a specific city, zip code, or location as the site where the actual mosquito bite and infection occurred because of the birds extended daily travel patterns. A bird may travel and die as much as 1 to 10 miles away from the location where it was infected. It is believed that a large number of birds are travelling further west this year to the coastal communities to seek relief from the unusual heat.

**Residents can reduce the risk of being infected with WNV by doing the following:**

- DEET - Apply insect repellent according to the label. Repellents containing DEET, picaradin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus are the longest lasting and most effective. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you.
- DAWN AND DUSK - Mosquitoes that carry WNV primarily bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time
- MOSQUITO PROOF YOUR HOME - Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- DRAIN - Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flowerpots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. Ensure that swimming pools, spas, and ponds are properly maintained. If you have an ornamental pond, use mosquito fish. You can make an arrangement to pick up free mosquito fish at the District by calling 310-915-7370.

**Reporting Dead Birds: 1-877-WNV BIRD (1-877-968-2473):**

The public is encouraged to report dead birds to help with West Nile virus surveillance and control efforts. Dead birds should be reported to the toll-free hotline number at **1-877-WNV BIRD (1-877-968-2473)**. Dead birds must be less than 24 hours old to be able to test them for West Nile virus. If the bird is rigid or decomposed, it cannot be used for testing. Birds that are not in a condition to be tested can be disposed of in your normal weekly trash by taking the following steps: 1) Take a plastic garbage bag and inserting your hand in the open end; 2) Grab the dead bird and pull it into the garbage bag using an “outside-to-inside” pulling motion; 3) Tie off the bag with the bird and place it in your trash for disposal.

**Symptoms of West Nile virus:**

People infected with WNV can experience a variety of symptoms that may include: no symptoms, West Nile Fever, or West Nile Neuroinvasive disease. Symptoms usually occur 2-15 days after infection. If you suspect you have contracted WNV, consult your physician for testing and care.

**Symptoms of “West Nile Fever” can include:**

- Headaches (often severe)
- High fever
- Tiredness and body aches
- A skin rash and swollen lymph glands

These symptoms may last from several days to several weeks.

**Symptoms of “West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease” can include:**

- Severe Headache
- High Fever
- Stiff neck
- Stupor
- Disorientation
- Tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness
- Paralysis
- Coma: This form of the disease can lead to long lasting and/or permanent damage to the brain.

**For mosquito problems or to pick up mosquito fish (1-310-915-7370):** Call 1-310-915-7370 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**For additional information on WNV and the Los Angeles County West Vector & Vector-Borne Disease Control District ([www.lawestvector.org](http://www.lawestvector.org)):** Please visit the District’s website at [www.lawestvector.org](http://www.lawestvector.org). WNV results and new positives are updated on a weekly basis.

**Questions:** If you have any questions, please contact Robert Saviskas, Executive Director, at (310) 915-7370 ext. 223 or at [rsaviskas@lawestvector.org](mailto:rsaviskas@lawestvector.org).



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## **Public Health Advisory**

**September 7, 2012**

Five (5) New Dead Birds Collected in Two Different Zip Codes in the City of Culver City (90230, & 90232) have Tested Positive for West Nile Virus.

Five (5) new dead birds collected in two different zip codes in the City of Culver City (90230, & 90232) have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

WNV is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they first feed on birds that carry the virus, and then bite a human or animal.

### **What does it mean?**

West Nile virus is endemic in Los Angeles County and California, and nationally has been found in all 50 states since its introduction into the United States in 1999.

Currently, 87 zip codes out of 361 located in the County of Los Angeles have recorded positives for WNV.

A positive result from sentinel chicken flocks and trapped adult mosquitoes are more specific with respect to the actual site of the infection, whereas positive dead birds are less specific with respect to the actual site of the infection.

Birds routinely travel many miles from their nighttime nesting locations to feed and scavenge during the day before they return to their original location in the evening. Although positive birds collected in a specific area are significant with respect to trends on a wider basis, it does not definitively identify a specific city, zip code, or location as the site where the actual mosquito bite and infection occurred because of the birds' extended daily travel patterns. A bird may travel and die as much as 1 to 10 miles away from the location where it was infected. A positive result from a sentinel chicken flock or trapped adult mosquitoes is more specific with respect to the location of the infection since they are site specific.

### **What should the city do?**

There is no specific action that is required by the city, but the District recommends that the city make this information known to their residents through their normal communication process so people walking or sitting outside at dawn or dusk will take the appropriate precautions listed below to protect themselves from being bitten by infected mosquitoes.

## **Residents can protect themselves from WNV by doing the following:**

- DEET - Apply insect repellent according to the label. Repellents containing DEET, picaradin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus are the longest lasting and most effective. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you.
- DAWN AND DUSK - Mosquitoes that carry WNV primarily bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time.
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