



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CDPH Reports First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2011**

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today reported a man in Santa Barbara County is the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus infection in California this year. The man was hospitalized, but is now recovering at home.

"With the first confirmed human illness from West Nile virus this year, we are intensifying our surveillance for the virus with the help of all counties," said CDPH Chief Deputy Director Kathleen Billingsley. "To protect against West Nile virus, the most important step people can take is avoiding mosquito bites."

West Nile virus is most commonly transmitted to humans and animals by the bite of a mosquito harboring the virus. The risk of serious illness to most people is low. However, some individuals – less than 1 percent – will develop serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis. People 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms. Recent data also indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness.

To date in 2011, West Nile virus has been detected in [14 other California counties](#).

CDPH recommends that individuals prevent exposure to mosquito bites and West Nile virus by practicing the "Four Ds":

1. **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. **DRESS** – Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure to mosquito bites.
3. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
4. **DRAIN** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish (available from your local

mosquito and vector control agency) or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae.

California's [West Nile virus website](#) includes the latest information on West Nile virus activity in the state. Californians are encouraged to report all dead birds and dead tree squirrels on the website or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

