



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Gerardo Pinedo
County Administrative Officer

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695
www.YoloCounty.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 24, 2023

Contact: Dwight Coddington

Email: PIO@YoloCounty.org

Phone: (530) 908-0186

Yolo County Reports First West Nile Virus Death of 2023

(Woodland, CA) - The Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency's Public Health Branch has sadly confirmed that a Yolo County resident has died from West Nile virus disease. The death is the first from West Nile virus in Yolo County since 2018. The individual succumbed to the mosquito-transmitted infection after experiencing symptoms consistent with neuroinvasive West Nile virus disease.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends affected by the loss of this resident due to West Nile virus," said Yolo County's Public Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson. "This tragic death underscores the importance of preventing mosquito bites. While most West Nile virus infections have no symptoms, some people get very sick and may die, especially older adults and people with underlying conditions or weakened immune systems. This is a bad mosquito and West Nile virus year. One in four mosquito samples in Yolo County is testing positive for West Nile virus right now. Take action to protect yourself and your loved ones from mosquito bites, especially around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active."

"It has been a very intense season for West Nile virus and the risk of becoming sick is very real," said Gary Goodman, Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District Manager. Yolo County Public Health has identified eight cases of West Nile virus among county residents in 2023 so far. In 2022, Yolo County recorded a total of three cases of West Nile virus. In addition to seeing more cases in 2023 than 2022, Yolo County Public Health has seen cases of severe (neuroinvasive) disease in younger persons this season, indicating the need to take West Nile virus prevention seriously regardless of your age.

West Nile virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus from infected birds. Symptoms usually develop within a week after being bit by an infected mosquito. Symptoms of West Nile virus may include fever, nausea, headaches, and muscle aches, lasting from a few days to several weeks. While most infected individuals have no symptoms, severe complications such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis, or even death can occur, particularly in those over 60 years old or with compromised immune systems.

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for West Nile virus. Therefore, adopting preventive measures remains crucial in minimizing the risk of contracting the virus. To mitigate the risk of West Nile virus infection, Yolo County Public Health and Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District recommend following the 7 D's to reduce mosquito exposure:

- **DRAIN** any stagnant water to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

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- **DAWN** and **DUSK**, when mosquitoes are most active, are times to limit outdoor activities.
- **DRESS** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors.
- **DEFEND** against mosquitoes by using effective insect repellents containing **DEET**, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Ensure **DOOR** and window screens are intact to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- For assistance, contact the **DISTRICT** at 1-800-429-1022 to address mosquito concerns.

Mosquito activity is expected to decrease by October, at which time residents can reduce their vigilance against mosquito exposure.

West Nile virus monitoring efforts involve healthcare providers reporting cases and labs reporting positive test results to Yolo County Public Health for follow-up. Environmental monitoring entails testing mosquito batches, deceased birds, and sick horses. Residents who come across a sick or deceased bird are urged to contact the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District at 1-800-429-1022, which can arrange for testing.

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