

May 21, 2008

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West Nile Virus season is here. West Nile Virus (WNV) activity has been detected in mosquito pools, dead birds, and sentinel chickens in California thus far in 2008. In Orange County, 17 WNV-positive dead birds and a positive mosquito pool have been reported. Although no human cases of WNV infection have been reported yet in California, the recent increase in WNV activity in Orange County suggests that human cases could soon follow. Human cases have already been reported in Arizona, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Consider WNV infection in your patients with aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, acute flaccid paralysis or prolonged fever and submit specimens for testing.

• **Clinical description of WNV infection:**

- The incubation period for WNV infection ranges from 2 to 14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito. Most infections in humans are asymptomatic.
- Clinical syndromes range from febrile headache to aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis. Rash, myalgia, lymphadenopathy, and muscle weakness may also be prominent.
- People over the age of 50 years are at risk for more severe disease from WNV infection.

• **Diagnosis** is made by serology (IgM or paired acute and convalescent IgG) for WNV. Testing is available through commercial laboratories and through OC Public Health on a case-by-case basis (714-834-8180).

- WNV IgM may be negative early in the course of the disease and serology may cross react with other flaviviruses (e.g., dengue, St. Louis Encephalitis, or yellow fever, including yellow fever vaccine).
- Repeat serology may be indicated if initial testing is negative in the first 10 days after onset of symptoms.

• **Treatment** is mainly supportive care. For clinical trials: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/clinicalTrials.htm.

• **For clinical guidance:** <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/clinicians/>.

• **Reporting:** WN fever (WNF), West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND), asymptomatic WNV infection, aseptic meningitis, and encephalitis are all reportable diseases and should be reported within one working day to OC Epidemiology via phone (714-834-8180) or fax (714-834-8196).

National West Nile Virus Activity, as of May 6, 2008:



Recommended Resources

Orange County Health Care Agency:
www.ochca.com/epi/wnv

Orange County Vector Control District:
www.ocvcd.org or Ph: 714-971-2421

California Department of Public Health:
www.westnile.ca.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile

Educate your patients, friends and family about WNV prevention -- avoiding mosquito bites:

- Eliminate standing water on your property, as this is where mosquitoes breed. Drain pots, unclog gutters, and keep swimming pools clean and chlorinated or drained and covered.
- Make sure that door and window screens are installed and in good condition to keep mosquitoes out.
- When outdoors, use an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Always follow the product directions on the label.
- Avoid being outdoors during dusk and dawn which are prime mosquito biting times and wear long sleeves and long pants while outdoors.



For comments or suggestions on this newsletter, please contact Suvas Patel, MPH or Dr. Michele Cheung at (714) 834-8180. To receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at epi@ochca.com.