



City and County of San Francisco

Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH  
Health Officer

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Eileen Shields, Public Information Officer**

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**415/554-2507 (o) 415/370-3377 (cell)**

[Eileen.Shields@sfdph.org](mailto:Eileen.Shields@sfdph.org)

### **San Francisco Reports First Locally Acquired Human Case of West Nile Virus**

**San Francisco, CA** – San Francisco health officials announced that a case of human West Nile Virus (WNV) has been confirmed in a San Francisco resident who has not recently traveled outside the Bay Area, suggesting that the disease was locally acquired. The patient, an adult male, is recovering at home.

Recently, one dead bird found in San Francisco tested positive for WNV, indicating that the virus is present in the SF environment this year. However, there is no way to determine whether the patient was infected within SF or in one of the surrounding Bay Area counties.

This is the first locally acquired human case reported in San Francisco since 2005 when WNV first became reportable. In 2010 one SF resident became infected with WNV from an organ transplant. The WNV-infected bird is only the third such bird reported in SF since 2007.

Cases are increasing throughout California and across the nation. As of September 25, 2012 California reported 165 cases of WNV in humans. Nationally 3,142 cases have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), making this year the highest number of cases reported year to date since 2003. Almost 40% of the reported cases are from Texas. Of the 134 deaths nationwide, eight have occurred in California.

In response to the first positive case of WNV in a human, the San Francisco Department of Public Health issued a Health Update to medical providers in San Francisco, requesting that clinicians be alert for human cases of West Nile Virus and to report cases to the local health department.

Among persons who become infected with WNV, 4 out of 5 do not experience any illness. Most of those who become ill develop mild symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, nausea, headache, muscle aches, skin rash, or swollen lymph nodes. However, WNV does sometimes cause more severe illness, including encephalitis or meningitis, particularly in the elderly and in individuals with compromised immune systems.

WNV is most often transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Human-to-human transmission of WNV

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**The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.**

We shall ~ Assess and research the health of the community ~ Develop and enforce health policy ~ Prevent disease and injury ~  
~ Educate the public and train health care providers ~ Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services ~ Ensure equal access to all ~

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generally does not occur, except for rare instances such as through organ transplantation or blood transfusion.

Currently no human vaccine is available, although several are in trials. WNV prevention relies on controlling mosquito sources and educating the public to avoid exposure to mosquitoes. Individuals can significantly reduce their risk of disease if they follow the recommendations below.

- Drain standing water; as little as a tablespoon of water can support mosquito breeding.
  - Report significant mosquito activity or standing water in San Francisco to DPH by calling 3-1-1
  - Report dead birds to the State WNV hotline at 1(877)WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473)
- Install or repair screens on doors and windows.
- During outdoor activity when mosquitoes are active:
  - Wear protective clothing with long pants and long sleeves. Treat clothing, hats, and mosquito netting with Permethrin insecticide to further discourage mosquitoes.
  - Apply an insect repellent containing at least 20% DEET or 20% Picaridin to exposed skin when mosquitoes are active. For guidance on use of DEET on children, refer to the CDC website below.

#### INFORMATIONAL LINKS

- **SF Department of Public Health:** <http://sfcdph.org/westnilevirus.html>
- **California Dept Public Health WNV Website:** <http://westnile.ca.gov/>
- **CDC:** [www.cdc.gov/westnile/](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/)
- **US Geological Survey Maps of WNV activity:** <http://westnilemaps.usgs.gov>