



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 29, 2023

Public Health Communication
(559) 259-1798 or (559) 974-2302

Fresno Mosquito and Vector Control District
Ryan McNeil (559) 268-6565

St. Louis Encephalitis in Mosquitoes Confirmed in Fresno County

The Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) has been notified by state authorities that St. Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV) has been detected in a *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquito sample within Fresno County. This is the first detection of SLEV activity in Fresno County this year. Last year, the first such detection was on August 31.

“This finding serves as a reminder about mosquito-borne diseases, which can be serious and sometimes fatal. We are asking residents to help control mosquito infestations and protect our communities from mosquito bites and the diseases they transmit,” says Fresno County Interim Health Officer Dr. Rais Vohra.

Fresno County is seeing a higher number of mosquito populations due to the excessive moisture in the region following last winter’s storms, and vector-borne diseases are a well-described consequence of climate hazards such as storms and floods. The local Fresno County Mosquito Control Districts are partnering with FCDPH to respond with increased surveillance, public education, and chemical applications to control the population of mosquitoes in selected communities with higher levels of infestation.

SLE is a mosquito-borne disease caused by SLEV and can cause inflammation of the brain. Most people infected with SLEV will have few to no symptoms, but a small number of victims can become severely ill with symptoms of meningitis/encephalitis (brain infection). The most common symptoms are mild, flu-like symptoms, including fever and headache, from 5 to 15 days after being infected. People get SLE from the bite of an infected mosquito and it is not transmitted from person to person. The mosquito becomes infected with the virus after biting a bird infected with SLEV.

Historically, SLEV has been found in the southern and Central Valley regions of California. West Nile Virus (WNV) transmission and prevention are similar to SLEV, but WNV is more common.

The FCDPH recommends that individuals contact their local Fresno County Mosquito Control District regarding standing water or mosquito problems, as well as to report any neglected swimming pools. Neglected pools are a major source of mosquito production in urban and suburban areas. Protect against mosquito bites by practicing the “**Three Ds**”:

1. **DETER** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. Insect repellents should not be used on children under two months of age.
2. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes usually bite in the early mornings and evenings. It is important to wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these hours of day. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

Promotion, preservation and protection of the community’s health

1221 Fulton Mall / P. O. Box 11867, Fresno, CA 93775

(559) 600-3200 • FAX (559) 600-7687

The County of Fresno is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

www.co.fresno.ca.us • www.fcdph.org

3. **DRAIN** – Mosquitoes develop in standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property by emptying flowerpots, old car tires, buckets, and other containers. Ensure windows and drains are covered with screens. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local Fresno County Mosquito Control District. California’s WNV website includes the latest information on vector-borne disease (including SLEV) activity in the state.

All residents are encouraged to report dead birds by visiting www.westnile.ca.gov or by calling toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

For additionally information, please visit the following resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/sle/index.html>
- California Department of Public Health: <https://bit.ly/39nevb7>
- California WNV Website: <https://westnile.ca.gov/sle.php>
- Local Fresno County Mosquito Control District: <https://fresnocountymosquito.org/>

###