

West Nile Virus at CSUCI

Background

West Nile Virus (WNV) has arrived in Ventura County. Birds have been testing positive since 2004 and a few human cases have been reported. The virus primarily infects only birds and is transmitted by mosquitoes. However, a person may be infected if bitten by an infected mosquito.

Mosquitoes are the primary mode of transmission and the only concern on Campus. The disease can not be transmitted through contact with dead birds or transmitted human to human. At CSUCI we have a common day-biting mosquito (salt marsh mosquito) that is relatively ineffective at transmitting disease; night biting mosquitoes are primarily responsible for human infections.

Serious illness is rare - One out of every 150 people who become infected with WNV will develop serious disease (West Nile encephalitis or West Nile Meningitis). There have been more than 500 fatalities from WNV since it was detected on the US east coast in 1999. For comparison, there are 30,000 to 40,000 deaths in the US from influenza each year.

Prevention

1. When outdoors wear long sleeved shirts, long pants and socks to cover exposed skin.
1. Try to avoid being outdoors between dusk and dawn because many mosquitoes bite at night.
2. Use insect repellent containing DEET.
3. Report areas of standing water to OPC. OPC cooperates with the Ventura County mosquito control program to control local breeding areas.
4. Bird infection information is helpful to our community health departments. Report any dead crows, ravens, jays or birds of prey to OPC.

More information

Visit the following links for more information or contact the Environment, Safety and Risk Management office at X-8847 with any questions or concerns.

Health risk facts:

<http://environmentalrisk.cornell.edu/WNV/WNVEducDocs/WNV-Healthrisks-rev04.pdf>

Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/resources/WestNileInfoCard2003_small.pdf

Safety of DEET mosquito repellent:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm

Surveillance information:

<http://westnile.ca.gov/>