County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
EDWARD L. MORENO, M.D., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR-HEALTH OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 5, 2011

Contact: Administrative Communication Unit
559-445-3249

First 2011 West Nile Virus Positive Human Cases in Fresno County

The Fresno County Department of Public Health has received reports of the first human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in the county this year. A man and a woman became ill and were hospitalized.

Fresno County is now the fourth California county to report WNV human cases in 2011. In 2010 in Fresno County, there were 23 WNV human cases and 1 WNV-related death with 6 deaths statewide last year.

Symptoms of WNV can be mild to severe and may include fever, headache, body aches, rash, nausea, vomiting, neck stiffness, and disorientation. About 80 percent of people who are infected with WNV will not experience any symptoms.

"These cases are a strong reminder that everyone, especially the elderly and those with chronic illnesses, should take this disease seriously and protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites," states Dr. Edward Moreno, Director and Health Officer of Fresno County Department of Public Health. "Residents should also ask their local mosquito abatement district office for help in eliminating mosquito-breeding sources around their homes."

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes or contracting WNV, Fresno County residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- Apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions.
- Use repellent, especially in the early morning and in the evening, when mosquitoes that carry WNV are most active.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- Eliminate standing water and containers that can hold water from around the home.
- Contact mosquito abatement districts to report poorly maintained swimming pools or water features that appear green. Neglected pools are the # 1 source of mosquito breeding in residential areas. There have been over 3,000 neglected swimming pools reported in Fresno County.
- Get FREE mosquito fish for backyard ponds or horse troughs from mosquito abatement districts.
- Report dead birds and dead tree squirrels.

Call 1-800-821-1577 or 559-268-6565 to speak to a mosquito abatement district representative. Service requests can be made at www.fresnomosquito.org Residents who are unable to maintain their pool should call their mosquito abatement district representative for advice to prevent the pool from becoming a mosquito breeding source.

Residents can also visit the Fresno County Department of Public Health website at www.fcdph.org to view or download a "Heard the Buzzzzz?" brochure which contains steps to protect the family, the home, and the community from WNV.

For additional information about WNV or to report dead birds and dead tree squirrels, visit the California Department of Public Health website at www.westnile.ca.gov or call 1-877-968-2473.

# # #