

July 7, 2023

NEWS RELEASE

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First Human Case of St. Louis Encephalitis Virus Confirmed in Kern County

The first human case of [St. Louis encephalitis virus](#) (SLEV) has been confirmed in Kern County. SLEV and [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) are viruses spread by mosquitoes that can make people sick. Most people infected with these viruses don't have symptoms, but in rare cases, these viruses can cause severe illness and lead to death. Older adults are at the highest risk for severe illness if they are infected. The symptoms and transmission of SLEV are similar to WNV, but SLEV is less common in California than WNV.

Recently, [Malaria](#), another mosquito-borne disease, has been making headlines in other states like Florida and Texas. There are no reported cases of Malaria in California to date and most malaria cases in the U.S. today are diagnosed in people who were infected while traveling in other countries where Malaria is common.

This summer, Kern County Public Health reminds everyone to take extra precautions to protect themselves from mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases during outdoor activities. Due to heavy rains this past winter, mosquito populations have increased across Kern County and the state, posing a greater risk for mosquito-borne diseases.

"This first confirmation of a mosquito-borne illness in a Kern County resident should serve as a serious reminder that we all need to protect ourselves against mosquitoes," says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health. "There are layers of protection that we encourage everyone to utilize such as using repellent when outdoors and stop mosquitoes at the source by removing standing water around your property." Below is a full list of recommendations to protect yourselves against mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases:

Reduce mosquito breeding sites:

- **Remove** standing or stagnate water from containers such flowerpots, fountains, birdbaths, pet bowls, and wading pools.
- **Clean/scrub** containers that collect water weekly to remove any potential mosquito eggs.
- **Maintain** swimming pools in working condition.
- **Stock** garden ponds with fish that eat mosquito larvae.
- **Report** areas of mosquito infestation to your local vector control district.

Decrease risk of mosquito-transmitted infections:

- **Avoid** mosquitoes and mosquito-infested areas at all times of the day.
- **Wear** long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- **Apply** mosquito repellent to exposed skin when outdoors.
- **Ensure** doors and windows have screens in good repair to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Visit our interactive webpage <https://kernpublichealth.com/west-nile-virus/> for more information.

Grounded in Health

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