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NEWS RELEASE

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Protect Yourself from Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Diseases this Summer

First detection of mosquito-borne diseases in Kern County mosquito population for 2023

Warmer weather brings increased mosquito activity and a heightened risk for mosquito-borne diseases. The first mosquito samples have been confirmed for West Nile virus (WNV) and for St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLEV) in Kern County this year. While there have been no human cases reported yet this year, Kern County Public Health reminds everyone to take precautions to protect yourself from mosquitoes.

[West Nile virus](#) (WNV) and [St. Louis encephalitis virus](#) (SLEV) 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.

"This first confirmation of mosquito-borne diseases present in our mosquito population should serve as a reminder that we all need to protect ourselves against mosquito bites," says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health. "Simple preventative measures such as removing sources of standing water in our yards can minimize the opportunity for mosquitoes to thrive in and around our homes."

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.

Please visit our regularly updated interactive webpage <https://kernpublichealth.com/west-nile-virus/> for more information. Although the first positive mosquito samples have been identified in the 93307 and 93203 zip codes, it is important for our entire community to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live, work, or play.

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Grounded in Health

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