



# COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

## PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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**For Immediate Release**  
August 28, 2008

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### **Health Care Agency Reports Second West Nile Virus Related Death in Orange County**

**(Santa Ana)** – Testing by the Health Care Agency has confirmed the second West Nile Virus (WNV) related death of an Orange County resident this year.

The victim was a 64 year old male resident of Garden Grove who died in August after being hospitalized. As of August 28, the total number of confirmed symptomatic cases of WNV infection in Orange County is 32, and 4 blood donors have tested positive for the virus. This is the highest number of WNV infections in the County since 2004, the first year that human cases were reported, when there were 62 symptomatic cases and 2 positive blood donors for the full year. Four WNV related deaths were reported in Orange County in 2004.

County Health officials say there may be several reasons for this increase in WNV activity, including environmental factors affecting the virus and human behavior. “We are very concerned about the level of West Nile virus activity in Orange County. Adding to our concern is the number of people who will celebrate the Labor Day holiday weekend by spending time outdoors, where they may be exposed to mosquitoes”, said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “With the holiday weekend approaching and children heading back to school and participating in outdoor sports, it is important to remember that by taking personal precautions, each of us can make a difference in the fight against West Nile virus. The public must take an active role in protecting themselves and their families from mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition

-More-

- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

While people over 50 years of age are at increased risk of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, the more serious form of West Nile Virus infection, there have been several cases reported this year in individuals under age 50.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District's website at [www.ocvcd.org](http://www.ocvcd.org). Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- State of California [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov)
- Orange County Health Care Agency [www.ocalthinfo.com](http://www.ocalthinfo.com)

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