



Maricopa County

NEWS RELEASE

Department of
Public Health
4041 N. Central Ave.
Suite 1400
Phoenix, AZ 85012
Phone: 602-506-6900
Fax: 602-506-6885
[www.maricopa.gov/
public_health/](http://www.maricopa.gov/public_health/)

Contact: Jeanene Fowler, Public Health: 602-722-1806 (cell)
Johnny Diloné, Environmental Services: 602-525-2423 (cell)

West Nile Virus Season Buzzing Human Cases Well Ahead of Last Year; Residents Reminded to Rid Yard of Standing Water

Phoenix (July 18, 2007) – The 2007 West Nile virus season is proving to be abuzz with activity and with the recent monsoon, it looks like things may get worse before they get better. Less than a month after the first confirmed human case of the virus, Maricopa County has now confirmed 11 human cases of West Nile virus (WNV).

“Last year at this time, we hadn’t even recorded our first case for the year,” said Dr. Bob England, director of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health. “Today, we have 11 confirmed cases, which is on track to be our second worst season since West Nile was introduced in our community.”

Fulton Brock, chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors added, “With very little rain so far this season, we had been looking at backyard breeding as the primary culprit. Monday night’s storm will only complicate that, meaning a higher risk of contracting West Nile.”

Backyard breeding can occur anywhere; in as small a location as water in flower pots or pet bowls, to bigger spots such as green pools and backyard irrigation. It is important that residents survey their yards, especially after rainstorms, to make sure all standing water is dumped out. Some species of mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus don’t tend to travel very far, so if neighbors work together to rid their yards of standing water, this will decrease the likelihood of mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases in their neighborhoods.

WNV is transmitted to humans from the bite of an infected mosquito. Approximately 20 percent of people infected with the virus will feel flu-like symptoms occurring three to 15 days after the mosquito bite.

Symptoms may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, and skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. A small percentage of people who are infected with WNV will experience severe symptoms, such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis, and even death. People over the age of 50 are generally at a higher risk for severe symptoms. If a person thinks he or she has WNV symptoms, he or she should consult their health care provider.

Although the majority of people who become infected with the virus will show no symptoms at all, for a small percentage of people it can be serious or even fatal.

The county’s Department of Environmental Services works to monitor and reduce mosquito breeding across the Valley. “We’ve investigated 9,600 sites and treated more than 3,400 of them this year alone,” said John Power, Environmental Services director, “but nothing takes the place of personal protection.”

–MORE–

Residents are encouraged to protect themselves from WNV by taking the following steps:

- Use insect repellent properly, according to the product label's instructions.
- Wear light-colored long sleeves, pants, and socks when the weather allows.
- Keep window and door screens repaired.
- Avoid being outside at dusk and dawn, and at other times of heavy mosquito activity.

During the summer months, many Valley residents schedule their outdoor activities during the early morning and evening hours in order to avoid the heat. Unfortunately, this is when mosquitoes are at their most active.

"If you're going out for an early morning round of golf or an evening walk, remember to prevent WNV by keeping mosquitoes off of you. Use insect repellent, and wear long sleeves and pants if possible," England said.

Residents are encouraged to mosquito-proof their homes by taking the following precautions:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around your property. Drain standing water in potted plants, tires, and other containers.
- Avoid over-watering your lawn.
- Keep fountains, animal troughs, and swimming pools properly operating and free from debris.

For more information on West Nile virus, public health assistance, as well as for WNV dead bird drop-off locations, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, and for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 or visit www.maricopa.gov/wnv.

#