



Utah Mosquito  
Abatement  
Association



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **WNV Detected in Salt Lake County Mosquito Pools**

*Health officials urge residents to protect themselves and families*

SALT LAKE COUNTY – The Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) today reported that West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquito pools within Salt Lake County boundaries and health officials are urging residents to take precautionary measures to avoid exposure to the virus.

In early June, local Mosquito Abatement Districts (MADs) began trapping and collecting mosquito samples at numerous locations throughout Salt Lake County. The samples are then sent to the Utah Public Health Laboratory for testing.

“Like the sentinel chicken program, testing mosquitoes is another part of our total statewide surveillance program and gives us a “heads up” on when WNV is active in the area so we can take steps to reduce the chances of human exposure,” says Dr. Dagmar Vitek, SLVHD Deputy Director. “Steps like ground and aerial mosquito spraying but, most importantly, reminding residents to use mosquito repellent.”

Local MADs, which actually do abatement activities throughout the year, will be increasing certain abatement activities such as ground spraying (known as “fogging”) at various locations over the next few weeks. Dr. Vitek says that while fogging greatly helps reduce mosquito populations, county residents need to take personal precautions to avoid exposure to mosquito bites. Prevention measures include the following:

- When outside during the periods when mosquitoes are most active (from dusk to dawn), cover up by wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, shoes and socks.
- Use mosquito repellents with DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Eliminate standing water in tires or other containers to eliminate mosquito breeding areas.

Dr Vitek also reminds residents that exposure to WNV can occur anywhere, including at home. She says that, “some of our human cases last year were infected right in their own back yards.”

To explain the importance of people implementing these prevention measures, Rich Lakin, Communicable Disease Manager with the Utah Department of Health adds that, “Roughly one third of the reported human cases in Utah in 2006 were neuroinvasive, the most serious form of the disease, and five deaths.”

Lakin also added that:

- Although most cases occurred in people over the age of 40, cases were reported in infants through young adults.
- One in every five people exposed to the virus have severe flu-like symptoms with fever, muscle aches and possibly a rash.
- About one in 150 develop more severe illness affecting the brain and spinal cord.
- Symptoms may include headache, paralysis, and stiff neck, and patients may suffer long-lasting effects.
- Permanent disability and death can also result.

For more information on WNV, mosquito repellent, and other precautions, visit the SLVHD website at [www.slvhealth.org](http://www.slvhealth.org) or call (801) 534-4600.

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