To decrease exposure to mosquitoes and the infections they may carry:

- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property because standing water provides a place for mosquitoes to develop.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- If you do go out apply insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

Animal Case Surveillance
Horses and ratites (e.g. emu and ostrich) with encephalitis are routinely tested for WNV, WEE, and other mosquito transmitted diseases. Animal owners should consult a veterinarian if their animal is ill.

Dead Bird Surveillance
California began to test dead crows and related birds for WNV in 2000. Reporting dead crows and other birds helps identify where the virus is occurring in California. In 2004, West Nile virus positive dead birds were found in all 58 counties in California. State agencies, private organizations, and individuals participate in the surveillance program by reporting dead birds.

West Nile Virus Information and Dead Bird Reporting
For more information or to report a dead bird visit: www.westnile.ca.gov or call 1-877-WNV-BIRD

Division of Communicable Disease Control
California Department of Health Services

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION & CONTROL

- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property because standing water provides a place for mosquitoes to develop.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
- If you do go out apply insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

For more information: www.westnile.ca.gov or 1-877-WNV-BIRD
**WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?**

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus commonly found in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. West Nile virus was first introduced into the United States in New York City in 1999. West Nile virus is transmitted to people and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito acquires the infection by feeding on a bird with virus in its blood. In California in 2004, West Nile virus was found throughout the state. There were 830 human West Nile virus cases detected, and 28 people died.

**WHAT IS THE RISK OF GETTING SICK FROM WEST NILE VIRUS?**

People over 50 have a higher chance of getting sick when infected with WNV. Also, they are more likely to develop serious symptoms of West Nile virus if they do get sick and should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

**Being outside means you’re at risk.** The more time you spend outdoors, the greater chance you have to be bitten by an infected mosquito. Take precautions to avoid mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or playing.

**Risk of transmission through medical procedures is very low.** All donated blood is checked for West Nile virus before being used. The risk of getting West Nile virus through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small, and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor.

**TRANSMISSION CYCLE OF WEST NILE VIRUS**

Reservoir Host: Birds

Insect Vector: Mosquitoes

Accidental Hosts: People & Animals

**HOW DO PEOPLE & ANIMALS GET WEST NILE VIRUS?**

West Nile virus is usually transmitted to people and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Some species of birds, such as crows and jays, are very susceptible to the virus and are more likely to die from infection. Horses are also very susceptible to West Nile virus and approximately one-third of horses that become ill have died or been euthanized.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN PEOPLE?**

**Serious Symptoms in a Few People.** Less than 1 percent (about one in 150) of the people infected with West Nile virus will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

**Milder Symptoms in Some People.** Up to 20 percent (about 1 in 5) of the people who become infected will display symptoms which can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms generally last for just a few days, although some people have been sick for several weeks.

**No Symptoms in Most People.** Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms at all.

Call your doctor or clinic if you have questions.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN ANIMALS?**

**Birds**

Wild birds serve as the main source of virus for mosquitoes. Infection has been reported in more than 225 bird species. Although many birds that are infected with West Nile virus will not appear ill, West Nile virus infection can cause serious illness and death in some birds. The most severe illnesses are seen among the corvid birds, which include crows, jays, ravens, and magpies.

**Horses**

Like people, most horses bitten by mosquitoes will not become sick with West Nile virus. However, of those that do, clinical signs may include stumbling, circling, hind leg weakness, inability to stand, muscle tremors, and death. A vaccine to prevent West Nile virus infection in horses is available. Horse owners should consult with a veterinarian about West Nile virus vaccine and other vaccines against mosquito-borne diseases, such as western equine encephalitis. For more information on West Nile virus and horses, please visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture website at www.cdfa.ca.gov.

**Dogs and Cats**

Dogs and cats can be exposed to West Nile virus in the same way as humans. However, these animals are very resistant to West Nile virus and very rarely become ill. Concerned pet owners should consult with a veterinarian.

**WHICH ANIMALS GET WEST NILE VIRUS?**

An infected mosquito can bite any animal, but not all animals will become sick. The disease most often affects birds but may occasionally cause disease in other animals.

**Bats**

**Ducks**

**Gulls**

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE ALERT TO WEST NILE VIRUS?**

West Nile virus is a serious disease that can be transmitted to people and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Early detection and surveillance of West Nile virus activity help to identify areas where the virus may be circulating. This information is used to develop public health interventions and control measures.