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**From:** UCSFSTAFF [mailto:UCSFSTAFF@BELLE.UCSF.EDU] **On Behalf Of** UCSF Safety & Security Update

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 22, 2004 8:35 AM

**To:** UCSFSTAFF@BELLE.UCSF.EDU

**Subject:** WEST NILE VIRUS AN INCREASING PRESENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO

FORWARDED ON BEHALF OF THE CHANCELLOR'S STEERING COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR,  
BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL AND CYBER-SECURITY TERRORISM  
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## **WEST NILE VIRUS AN INCREASING PRESENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO**

A bird found above the main UCSF campus in early September has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV), the ninth WNV-infected bird identified in San Francisco. WNV-infected birds have been found in all but two of California's 58 counties. Only one person has contracted the disease so far in the Bay Area, and most people who are exposed to WNV do not become ill.

The dead robin was found by maintenance staff at the Aldea student housing complex on the southern edge of the UCSF property. It was taken to the San Francisco Department of Public Health according to established procedure, and sent from there to the California Department of Health Services laboratory at Davis for analysis, where the West Nile Virus presence was confirmed.

A meeting will be held for residents of the Aldea student apartments to answer questions they may have about the virus.

WNV is generally spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Birds are the primary host. The virus lives in the mosquito and is transmitted to a new host when the insect bites an animal or person. The virus is most prevalent from May to October when mosquitoes are most abundant.

The UCSF Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) and Facilities Management carry out a mosquito surveillance and control program on all UCSF property to identify and eliminate mosquito breeding habitats – standing water in open containers, gutters, drainage ditches, tree hollows and other sites -- and kill mosquito larvae if found. OEHS works with the San Francisco Department of Public Health to monitor the success of the mosquito abatement program.

### **The Risk, Symptoms and Treatment**

- **Most people infected by WNV do not become ill**

Most people exposed to WNV through mosquito bites do not develop any symptoms, or only mild viral symptoms. Only about 20 percent of infected people develop a mild illness called West Nile fever, including headache, body aches and fever, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body, and sometimes nausea and eye pain. About one infection out of 150 will be more severe, involving high fever, neck pain, confusion and serious neurological disease. Advanced age is the most significant risk factor for this rare, but serious condition.

While there is no specific treatment for West Nile illness, supportive care, involving hospitalization, intravenous fluids, respiratory support and prevention of secondary infections help recovery for patients with severe disease.

- **Human to human transmission is very rare**

Transmission does not occur through the respiratory route or by touching, caring for a patient, kissing or sexual contact.

Only in a very small number of cases has WNV been spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breastfeeding or during pregnancy from mother to baby.

### **Prevention and Control – What You can Do**

Many steps can be taken to decrease exposure to mosquitoes and the infections they may carry:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially dawn and dusk.
- When outdoors, cover up as much as possible, wearing long pants, long sleeved shirt, particularly protecting ankles and wrists and the back of the neck.
- Apply insect repellents. The repellent should contain DEET.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens with no tears and holes.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.
- Mosquitoes breed wherever there is standing water such as puddles, ditches, and in containers. A small amount of water can hatch thousands of mosquitoes within one week.
- Report campus-based mosquito problems to UCSF, OEH&S at 476-1300.
- Report dead birds, especially crows, ravens, magpies or jays, to OEH&S at 476-1300 for pick-up and testing. Do NOT pick up a dead bird with your bare hands.

### **Faculty, staff and students, if you are diagnosed with WNV, please inform:**

Medical Center Infection Control (415-353-4343) if you are a medical center employee, the Communicable Disease Prevention Program (415-554-2830) if you are a campus employee, or Student Health Services if you are a student (415-476-1683).

**Clinicians who suspect cases of WNV should notify:**

Medical Center clinicians should immediately contact Infection Control at (415) 353-4343 and the SF Department of Public Health at (415) 554-2830.

Campus (non-Medical Center) clinicians who suspect such cases should contact the Communicable Disease Prevention program (415) 514-3861 and the SF Department of Public Health at (415) 554-2830.

**Links for more information:**

UCSF Communicable Disease Prevention Program: <http://cdp.ucsf.edu>

San Francisco Department of Public Health: [http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/eh/hn/WestNile/index\\_WestNile.htm](http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/eh/hn/WestNile/index_WestNile.htm)

The California Department of Health Services: <http://westnile.ca.gov/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

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