

# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY HEALTH AGENCY



## *Public Health Department*

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## ***PUBLIC HEALTH MEDIA RELEASE***

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### **Horse tests positive for West Nile Virus**

A horse in Northern San Luis Obispo County has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first horse to test positive for WNV in San Luis Obispo County in 2014. There have been no human cases reported, and no birds have tested positive for WNV in San Luis Obispo County this year, despite the proportion of mosquitoes testing positive for WNV throughout the State being at its highest level ever detected.

Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer for San Luis Obispo County, wants County residents to protect themselves from infection with this potentially fatal disease. “This case of West Nile Virus in a horse reminds us that WNV is present in our County, and it is important protect yourself from mosquitos bites,” Borenstein said. “Infected mosquitoes can spread this virus to humans, horses and birds, and the best way to prevent infection is to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds near your house and avoid getting bitten.”

The Public Health Department recommends that individuals prevent exposure to mosquito bites and WNV by observing the following guidelines:

1. Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 according to label instructions.
2. Wear protective clothing (long sleeves and pants) with insect repellent applied, especially when outdoors at dawn and dusk, the most popular mosquito feeding times.
3. Repair or replace any screens in your home that are broken or have holes.
4. Eliminate all standing water near your home, and change pet drinking water containers frequently.

Horse owners are reminded that there is a vaccine available for horses to prevent WNV. Dead birds can be sent to the State for testing. To report a dead bird, call the State WNV hotline at 1-877-WNV BIRD. For more information regarding WNV in California, or to use the online dead bird submittal form, visit [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

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