



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

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## October 2015

### **Yellow Fever in California? Fight the Bite.**

In a new release on October 14, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith warned Californians to protect themselves from two vector mosquitoes recently found for the first time in San Bernardino and Riverside counties - *Aedes aegypti* (the yellow fever mosquito) and *Aedes albopictus* (the Asian tiger mosquito). Dr Smith said, "It is important to know these species of mosquitoes because they are not what we're used to in California, and they can transmit diseases such as dengue fever, chikungunya and yellow fever. While the risk is still low in California, infected travelers coming back to California can transmit these viruses to mosquitoes that bite them. This can lead to additional people becoming infected if they are then bitten by those mosquitoes."

This is not the first time in recent years that these species of mosquitos have been detected by routine surveillance methods. Since 2013, when *A. aegyptii* was first discovered in Madera, Fresno and San Mateo counties, additional identifications have occurred in Tulare, Kern, Los Angeles, San Diego, Imperial, Orange, and Alameda counties. Also in September, *A. albopictus*, was detected in Kern and San Diego counties and has expanded in regions of Los Angeles County.

Neither of these mosquitoes is native to California. They are known for their black-and-white stripes, biting people during the middle of the day rather than dawn and dusk, and readily entering buildings. The more-familiar *Culex* mosquitoes - known to transmit West Nile Virus and Western Equine Encephalitis virus, bite primarily at dusk and dawn.

There is no vaccine or treatment for chikungunya or dengue fever, although a new vaccine that protects against all four types of dengue virus is under study. "To prevent these diseases from becoming established in California, it is important for everyone to take steps to keep these mosquitoes from spreading" Dr. Smith said. "If you notice that you are being bitten by mosquitoes during the day, or notice black-and-white striped mosquitoes, call your local mosquito and vector control agency."

### **West Nile Virus Update**

As of September 30, 2015, 245 human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) illness have been reported from 29 local health jurisdictions. No cases have been reported for San Luis Obispo or Santa Barbara counties. Hot spots include populous Los Angeles and Orange counties, and rural Butte County. Fully 71% of cases had neuro-invasive illness. Twelve WNV-related fatalities have been reported this year.

**The *Messenger* will no longer be faxed, but will be sent by e-mail and posted on the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory website [www.slopublichealth.org/lab](http://www.slopublichealth.org/lab).**