



## Department of Public Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Residents Urged to Take Action Against West Nile

*Weekend rains in El Paso increase chances for exposure to virus*

El Paso, Texas – In the wake of recent rainfall in the area, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health is advising residents to be proactive against the spread of the West Nile virus. The announcement comes as the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) confirms the first human case this year. That confirmation was in a patient from Travis County, Texas. Last year City Health Officials confirmed 16 cases of the disease in El Paso with two deaths related to West Nile infection.

“Working together as a community to reduce the breeding and presence of infected mosquitoes, we can lower the number of cases and deaths associated with the West Nile Virus in 2015,” said Robert Resendes, Public Health Director.

Practicing the “four Ds” is the best way to prevent the mosquito bites that transfer the disease:

- Use insect repellents that contain **DEET**
- **Drain** any standing water
- **Dress** in long, loose and light-colored clothing and
- Take extra care to avoid the outdoor and to use repellent and protective clothing from **Dusk to Dawn**.

To report large areas of standing water or areas suspected of mosquito breeding, call the Environmental Services Department (ESD) at (915) 3-1-1.

#### *Education*

In effort to increase awareness about the disease and ways the public can protect themselves, the Department has added a West Nile virus session to the list of presentations offered by the Speakers Bureau. Local civic and community organizations can schedule a presentation that will include background on the disease, prevention methods, as well as what people can look out for in regards to signs and symptoms of infection. Presentations can be scheduled by visiting [www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com), and then clicking on the Speakers Bureau link under Special Projects.

(-MORE-)

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Robert Resendes



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### *Symptoms*

- About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness which 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.
- Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.
- No Symptoms in Most People. Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

For more information on West Nile virus, please visit the Health Department website at [www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com) and click on the West Nile Virus link.

The Mission of the Department of Public Health is to provide research and evaluation, prevention, intervention, and mobilization services to the people of El Paso so they can be healthy, productive, safe and secure. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, visit [EPHealth.com](http://EPHealth.com) or dial 2-1-1.

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