Communicable Diseases Quarterly Report
Quarter 2: April 1 - June 30, 2019

Department of Public Health

Spotlight: West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is primarily spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, and is the leading cause of mosquito transmitted disease in the United States. Mosquitoes become carriers of WNV when they feed on infected birds. These mosquitoes are then able to spread WNV by biting humans. You cannot acquire WNV through the cough, sneeze or touch of an infected person. In Fresno County, the California Department of Public Health has reported 41 cases of WNV as of 9/20/19, and these cases represent 41.8% of all reported cases in the California during 2019.

Most people infected with WNV will show no symptoms, but some will develop mild illness. Those with mild disease can develop symptoms that include: head and body aches, joint pain, vomiting diarrhea and rash. Cases of mild WNV infection typically recover without major incident. Serious illness occurs in about 1 in 150 people, and can cause disease of the central nervous system including encephalitis and meningitis. In addition to the symptoms present in mild WNV, serious illness symptoms can include neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.

Currently there is no vaccine for WNV, but precautions can be taken to reduce infection chances. These included applying EPA registered mosquito repellants, wearing long sleeve clothing and using air conditioning/ window screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Because mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, it is important to remove sources of standing water around your environment to reduce the chance of mosquito populations developing.

References

Reportable Diseases in Fresno County:
A selection of Reportable Diseases appears in this Quarterly Report. Reportable disease information is compiled by number of cases and includes confirmed, probable and suspect classifications.

In the tables to the left, numbers of cases for each disease are listed for the current and previous year and corresponding quarter.

Helpful Links for Disease Rates
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/dastatistics
California Department of Public Health (CDPH): https://www.cdph.ca.gov
Fresno County Department of Public Health: http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health

Definitions:
- Communicable disease – a disease which can be transmitted directly or indirectly by a living organism or by a non-living object or substance. Examples include: from an infected person to another person who is susceptible; from an object (sheets, clothing, telephone handset, drinking glass) that may harbor germs to a susceptible person.
- Reportable disease – in compliance with federal and state health code, certain diseases must be reported when a confirmed or suspect diagnosis is made on a secured and standardized form. https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/notifiable/2019/ for more information.