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**NEWS
RELEASE**

07/14/2026

Public Health Officials Confirm Two Neuroinvasive West Nile Cases in El Paso

EL PASO, Texas—The City of El Paso Department of Public Health has confirmed two cases of neuroinvasive West Nile virus (WNV) in El Paso this year and is urging residents to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

One patient is a man in his 80s who lives in the 79907 ZIP code and is currently hospitalized. The second patient is a woman in her 60s with significant underlying medical conditions who lives in the 79932 ZIP code and is currently recovering in a rehabilitation facility.

The West Nile virus is transmitted to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes, which become carriers after feeding on infected birds. Symptoms of WNV may include fever, headache, body aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and swollen lymph nodes.

“While most West Nile virus infections are mild or cause no symptoms, these cases serve as an important reminder that mosquito bites can lead to serious illness,” said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, City-County Health Authority. “Taking simple preventive measures now can significantly reduce your risk and help protect our community.”

Most people infected with WNV never develop symptoms. About 1 in 5 people develop West Nile fever, a mild illness that can cause fever, headache, body aches, joint pain, or a rash. Approximately 1 in 150 infected people develop severe neuroinvasive disease affecting the brain or nervous system, and about 1 in 10 people with severe illness die from the infection.

Adults age 60 and older and people with underlying medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, or a history of organ transplantation, are at the greatest risk for severe illness.

Another mosquito-borne illness of concern is St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), which can also cause brain inflammation. While most infections are asymptomatic, severe cases can involve fever, confusion, seizures, or death, particularly in older adults. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for WNV or SLE, making prevention essential.

PROTECT YOURSELF WITH THE “FOUR DS”

The best way to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses is to follow these safety tips:

- **DEET** – Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535, or 2-undecanone when outdoors. Follow label directions.
- **DRESS** – Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks. Apply repellent to clothing, as mosquitoes can bite through thin fabrics.
- **DUSK and DAWN** – Limit outdoor activities during dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus are most active.
- **DRAIN** – Remove standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet bowls, discarded tires, birdbaths, and other containers. Refresh pet water daily.

Residents are also encouraged to install or repair window and door screens to help keep mosquitoes outside. Standing water or mosquito breeding sites can be reported by calling (915) 212-6000 or 311. For additional mosquito prevention tips, visit [EPHealth.com](https://www.elpasotexas.gov/EPHealth.com) and select the [Be Climate Ready tab](#).

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Leadership that is responsive + reliable

Media Contact: Soraya Ayub Palacios
ayubsx@elpasotexas.gov
915.212.1040