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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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Public Health Officials Report First West Nile Virus Death of 2026

EL PASO, Texas—he City of El Paso Department of Public Health has confirmed the first death due to neuroinvasive West Nile virus (WNV) disease in the El Paso community this year. The individual was a man in his 50s with underlying health conditions.

As of today, six (6) WNV cases and one death have been reported in the El Paso community this year.

“The Severe Central Nervous System West Nile Virus disease is extremely dangerous and can lead to potential complications, disability or even death,” said City-County Health Authority Dr. Hector Ocaranza. “With the recent rain it is imperative that the public take precaution to decrease the risk of getting infected with WNV by practicing the four Ds to prevent mosquito bites.”

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.

El Pasoans can help “fight the bite” by following these 4 easy prevention steps:

- **DEET:** Use insect repellents that contain DEET when outdoors.
- **DRESS:** Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors.
- **DUSK & DAWN:** Although mosquitoes associated with WNV can be active throughout the day, residents should take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours (from dusk to dawn) or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.
- **DRAIN:** Drain standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, and birdbaths. After rains or lawn watering, residents should “tip and toss” any standing water they find outside.

Eight out of 10 people infected with the WNV will not develop symptoms. However, 1 in 5 people who are infected develop West Nile fever, an illness that includes a fever and other symptoms such as body aches, joint pain, headache, or a rash. About 1 out of 150 infected people develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system and about 1 out of 10 cases of severe illness are fatal.

Residents can report standing water and mosquito breeding by calling (915) 212-6000 or 311.

For more information and tips visit [EPHealth.com](https://www.elpasotexas.gov/ephealth) under the Emergency Preparedness [Be Climate Ready](#) tab.

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