



MADERA COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION TEAM

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TITLE: Madera County Confirms Death from First Human Case of Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus in California in 2020

Madera County is reporting a fatality from St. Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV) in a male in his 90s from August 2020. This is the first confirmed case of SLEV in the state of California in 2020 and the first case in Madera County since 1976. While preliminary testing originally suggested the West Nile Virus, further testing has now confirmed SLEV as the final diagnosis.

Saint Louis Encephalitis is transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Testing of mosquitoes in Madera had demonstrated one pool testing positive recently for SLEV. Mosquito abatement control was notified at the time of the original diagnosis and has been spraying in the areas where the positive tests were localized. SLEV is similar to West Nile Virus: both can result in infections of the brain, paralysis, and rarely death. However, the majority of people infected with SLEV have mild or no symptoms. People over 50 years of age or with weakened immune systems are at greater risk of experiencing severe symptoms when infected. Symptoms of severe disease include fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion and decreased alertness. There is no vaccine.

“The risk for St. Louis Encephalitis remains low in Madera County. You can decrease your risk by using EPA-registered repellent to keep mosquitoes from biting you, mosquito proofing your home through the use of properly fitting doors and screens, and not allowing standing water to collect in your home or yard,” stated Simon Paul, Madera County Public Health Officer:

For more tips and information about SLEV visit the following websites:

- California Department of Public Health: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/SLE.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/sle/>
- Madera County Mosquito & Vector Control District: <http://maderamosq.org/>

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