

PRESS RELEASE

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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

COUNCILMAN SMITH URGES WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION

Los Angeles - Councilman Greig Smith continues his drive to provide the most current and accurate information to his constituents concerning the prevention of West Nile Virus. In addition to spreading the word regarding human prevention, the Councilman is taking additional steps to reach out to the equestrian community so that they can protect their horses. Experts are predicting a particularly vigilant strain this year and Smith intends to minimize the ability of the disease to spread within the City.

For humans, preventative measures are relatively simple. Avoiding mosquito bites by using repellants containing DEET, wearing protective clothing including long pants and sleeves and limiting outdoor exposure from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active, will greatly diminish risk. Homes should be mosquito-proofed by fixing or installing window screens and draining all standing water sources around your property. Additionally, all dead birds should be reported to 3-1-1.

Vaccinations are available for horses and an equine veterinarian should be consulted to obtain and administer them. It is recommended that horses in California be vaccinated twice annually, once in Spring and then again in Summer or early Fall. Horses vaccinated against equine encephalitis (EEE), western equine encephalitis (WEE) and Venezuelan equine encephalitis (VEE) are NOT protected from West Nile Virus.

In addition to vaccination, horse owners should thoroughly clean and empty water from troughs, flower pots, pet food and water dishes, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels and cans at least once a week. Overturning wheelbarrows and wading pools when not in use and removing discarded tires and other items will prevent water from collecting, as will cleaning out rain gutters. Mosquitoes can breed in standing water sources as small as a bottle cap in as little as four days.

Symptoms of Equine West Nile Virus include stumbling or lack of coordination, depression or apprehension, weakness of limbs, partial paralysis or inability to stand and muscle twitching. Horses may be infected without showing any clinical signs and fever is not a common symptom.

For continually updated information concerning West Nile Virus, the Councilman recommends the following websites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

California West Nile Surveillance Information Center: www.westnile.ca.gov

Los Angeles County Department of Health and Human Services: www.ladhs.org

UC Davis Center for Equine Health: www.ucdavis.edu (search “West Nile Virus”)