West Nile virus a concern in Placer County

Placer County Public Health officials are tell people to take precautions against West Nile virus, a preventable, mosquito-borne disease that can infect humans.

The disease is typically spread when a mosquito bites an infected bird, then bites a human. While most people who are infected with the virus will not become ill, in certain populations the disease can cause serious illness and even death.

The Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District has advised that there is increased mosquito activity and is conducting additional control activities and surveillance in and around areas where they have detected the virus.

In Placer County, most human cases have occurred between mid-July and the end of August.

About 20 percent of those infected with WNV may experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms, called West Nile fever, which may be prolonged. About one in 150 infected people will become very ill. People over 50 and people with suppressed or compromised immune systems are more likely to become seriously ill.

Her are tips for preventing the spread of West Nile virus:

Drain any standing water that may produce mosquitoes.

Defend yourself and your home by using an effective insect repellent and dressing protectively when outside and making sure screens on doors and windows are in good condition.

If you know of swimming pools that are not maintained and become “neglected,” report them to the district at (916)

380.5444.

Report dead birds to 877.968.2473.

Horses are vulnerable to West Nile virus, and the mortality rate for unvaccinated horses is high.