

What is West Nile virus?

- ▶ A mosquito-borne virus related to St. Louis encephalitis virus, yellow fever, and dengue
- ▶ Introduced to the U.S. in 1999 and California in 2003
- ▶ Almost 3,000 cases were detected in California between 2004 and 2010
- ▶ Infection may result in febrile illnesses of variable severity sometimes associated with central nervous system (CNS) involvement

West Nile Virus: Keep it on your radar!



Why Test for West Nile virus?

- Mosquito control and public health agencies can institute proper control measures to prevent further cases
- Testing differentiates WNV from other conditions (enterovirus, other arboviral diseases)
- Testing results offer anticipatory guidance--both WNV neuroinvasive disease and WN fever patients can have lingering symptoms and knowing the underlying etiology is helpful for the patient and family members.

When should West Nile virus testing be done?

- ▶ Usually April – November for patients presenting with:
 - Encephalitis
 - Aseptic meningitis
 - Acute flaccid paralysis; atypical Guillain-Barré syndrome; transverse myelitis, or
 - Febrile illness ($T \geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ for > 7 days), other symptoms may include headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes, eye pain, nausea or vomiting

Where and How to Test for West Nile virus

- ▶ Contact your local health department for details
- ▶ Acute serum specimen ($\geq 2\text{cc}$) and, if lumbar puncture performed, 1-2 cc cerebrospinal fluid are required for testing
 - Public Health labs may offer free testing

Where can I get more information?

- WNV: Keep It On Your Radar:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/KeepWNVonYourRadar.pps>
- www.westnile.ca.gov
- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>
- Cynthia Yen, MPH, Communicable Disease Emergency Response Branch: 510-620-3987

