



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Southwest Health District reports three human cases of West Nile Virus in Metro Albany

ALBANY, Ga. – Southwest Georgia Public Health District Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant announced today that lab tests have confirmed three cases of West Nile Virus in the Albany Metropolitan Area this season – two in Dougherty and one in Lee counties.

“These cases were identified as a result of blood donations,” Grant said. “The Red Cross routinely performs an Nucleic Acid Test for West Nile Virus, and when results came back positive, samples are redrawn for more testing, and then sent to the Georgia Public Health Laboratory for confirmatory testing. So far, three cases have come back positive from the state public health lab.”

The cases are the first this season in Southwest Health District’s 14 counties, and are among six human cases being reported in Georgia by the CDC as of Oct 14. So far this year, no deaths from West Nile have been reported in Georgia.

“The cases here include a 38-year-old from the eastern part of Dougherty County, a 23-year-old from central Dougherty County and a 46-year-old from eastern Lee County,” said Grant. “None of them was hospitalized, although symptoms such as fever and chills were reported. Disease investigators traced the onset of the disease to early July for one patient, early August for another and late August for the third, but the incidents were confirmed and reported this month.”

Testing the samples and following up on suspicious results with more intensive tests caused the lapse between the apparent onset of the disease and the date of reporting, she explained.

August is traditionally the peak season for cases of West Nile Virus in Southwest Georgia, Grant said.

She said most people who are infected with the disease do not have symptoms. “Those with a mild infection may experience flu-like symptoms such as headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph nodes and rashes,” Grant said. “A small number of people infected may develop serious illnesses such as meningitis, which is swelling of the membrane surrounding the spinal cord; or encephalitis, which is swelling of the brain.”

Those most at risk of developing serious illnesses when infected with West Nile are people over 50 and those with weakened immune systems.

Ways to reduce the risk of catching West Nile Virus include:

Avoid outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active – at dawn and dusk

Cover exposed skin if you must be outside

Use insect repellent with active ingredients such as DEET, oil or lemon eucalyptus or picaridin

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

Drain standing water

Repair screens

For more information about West Nile virus, go online to www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org.

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