

3 March, 2022

Public Health Alert – Mosquito warning in WNSWLHD

Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) is alerting the community to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus has been detected in samples taken from commercial pig farms at five locations across southern and western NSW, indicating the virus is likely circulating in the mosquito population.

JE is a mosquito-borne disease that may affect animals including pigs, and humans. The virus is spread by mosquito bites.

Less than one per cent of people infected with JE experience symptoms, which typically include fever, joint pain and rash. Occasionally, JE can cause severe neurological illness with headache, convulsions and reduced consciousness.

There is no specific treatment for JE or other mosquito-borne viruses. The best way to avoid infection is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, amplifying the importance of taking precautionary measures.

Simple actions to avoid mosquito bites include:

- When outside, cover up as much as possible with light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing and covered footwear.
- Use an effective insect repellent on exposed skin and reapply within a few hours. The best mosquito repellents contain Diethyl Toluamide (DEET), Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Use insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units (indoors) and mosquito coils (outdoors) to clear rooms or repel mosquitoes from an area.
- Cover all windows, doors, vents and other entrances with insect screens.
- Remove any water-holding containers outside the house where mosquitoes could breed.

For further information on mosquito-borne disease and ways to protect yourself go to:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/pests/vector/Pages/resources.aspx

Fact sheets on specific mosquito-borne diseases, including Japanese encephalitis Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus, are available at:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/pests/vector/Pages/factsheets.aspx

For further information, please contact the WNSWLHD Public Health Unit on (02) 6809 8979.