West Nile Virus: Keep it on your radar!

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 2009
► Infection may result in febrile illnesses of variable severity sometimes associated with central nervous system (CNS) involvement

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.
• Patients with WNV neuroinvasive disease may be eligible for a treatment trial evaluating the efficacy of a monoclonal antibody:
  http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00927953

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 ≥ 38°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 (≥2cc) 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 Jean, MPH, Communicable Disease Emergency Response Branch: 510-620-3987