



**NASSAU COUNTY  
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**First Mosquito Pool with La Crosse Virus  
Found in Nassau County**

**REPORTING AND TESTING OF CASES OF ENCEPHALITIS**

The New York State Department of Health reported today on the first isolation of La Crosse virus from a mosquito pool in Nassau County. This is the first identification of La Crosse virus in Nassau County for as long as records have been kept. The mosquitoes were found in Woodbury on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The virus was identified in a sample of *Aedes vexans*, a species which is active during the day as well as dusk and dawn. La Crosse virus infection generally produces mild illness, but occasionally may progress to severe encephalitis. The disease occurs more frequently in children under the age of 16.

*Aedes vexans* is a woodland mosquito and is found in tree holes as well as artificial containers such as old tires, buckets and other containers which also may be a breeding site of the West Nile virus carrying mosquito, the *Culex pipiens*. To date, no humans or horses have tested positive for West Nile in Nassau County. There have been 20 mosquito pools and one bird identified with West Nile virus.

La Crosse encephalitis may present as frank encephalitis progressing to seizures or coma. The majority of infections are subclinical or result in mild illness.

**Reporting cases of viral encephalitis:**

To ensure rapid identification of arboviral infection including La Crosse virus, please *report immediately* by telephone to the Nassau County Health Department at **571-3471** any adult or pediatric patient *with clinical*

*evidence of viral encephalitis.* In addition, providers should consider La Crosse virus infection in the differential diagnosis of patients presenting with focal paralysis, intractable seizures, coma or unexplained death.

**Testing for viral encephalitis and viral meningitis, including La Crosse virus:**

The NYSDOH Laboratory, Wadsworth Center, offers diagnostic testing for a wide range of viruses, including La Crosse virus, that have been associated with encephalitis and meningitis. Appropriate specimens for testing include cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), acute and convalescent sera, and brain biopsy or autopsy material. If you have a patient that meets the enclosed clinical criteria for La Crosse testing, we will assist you in arranging testing at the Wadsworth Center. Please call the Nassau County Health Department at **571-3471**.

Serologic testing for asymptomatic patients or those with mild symptoms, such as fever and headache, is not necessary. The likelihood of infection in these patients is extremely low, especially in the absence of an outbreak. Also, since there is no specific treatment for La Crosse infection, patients with mild symptoms do not require specific diagnostic testing. Mildly ill patients should be advised to seek medical attention if they develop more severe symptoms such as high fever, severe headache or seizures.

Thank you for your assistance in these important matters.