

Hidalgo County Health Advisory

Hidalgo County Health and Human Services is currently investigating two reports of West Nile Neuro-Invasive Disease. Therefore, proper precautions and methods for identification are vital. This includes implementation of prevention such as “Fight the Bite” and its 4 D’s, and laboratory testing appropriate for infection identification.

Prevention with the Four D’s:

- Indoors at **Dusk/Dawn**
- **Dress** in long sleeves/pants
- **Defend** using repellent like DEET
- **Drain** standing water

Medical Overview:

- Currently, no vaccine
- Those at risk for serious illness:
 - Those with cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease
 - Those with other preexisting conditions
- No current medical treatments
 - OTC medications used to relieve symptoms

Review of Diagnostic Testing:

- Testing of serum or cerebrospinal fluid
 - To detect WNV-specific IgM antibodies
- IgM antibodies detectable 3-8 days after onset of illness
- Antibodies can persist for 30-90 days after illness
- IgG presents evidence of past infection
- RT-PCR can be used to detect viral RNA

Recommended Laboratory Testing:

Arboviral Serology Panel:

- Testing for West Nile Virus, Dengue, and St. Louis encephalitis

It is highly recommended that these three serology labs are ordered when any one of these conditions is suspected. If an arboviral panel is not feasible, it is recommended that at least a combination of Dengue and West Nile Virus serology labs are ordered, testing for both IgM and IgG antibodies.

If patients present Meningitis and/or Encephalitis like symptoms, and other symptoms are consistent with West Nile Virus, it is recommended that CSF testing is ordered for West Nile Virus.