



State of Utah

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Utah Corrections working with health and abatement officials to take preventive steps after West Nile virus detected in mosquito testing**

The Utah Department of Corrections is collaborating with the Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District, the Salt Lake County Health Department, and the Utah Department of Health and Human Services to continue to implement preventive measures after detecting a West Nile virus-positive mosquito pool at the Utah State Correctional Facility (USCF) in Salt Lake City.

"While this is considered routine detection and fairly common this time of year, our top priority is to protect both our staff and the incarcerated population from mosquito bites," said Brian Redd, executive director for the Utah Department of Corrections. "We are committed to education and prevention, providing free and accessible repellent. We're grateful for the strong collaboration with health and abatement officials, as well as for the funding received from the legislature last year, which enables us to effectively manage the mosquito population at USCF."

Both incarcerated individuals and staff have been advised to take specific preventive measures for their safety. Mosquito repellent is accessible throughout the facilities, with monitoring by correctional staff. For those in restricted units, repellent will be provided during transitions to recreation yards.

UDC is encouraging staff and incarcerated individuals to wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, and close-toed shoes to minimize the risk of mosquito bites. Medical personnel at the prison will be monitoring staff and inmates for symptoms of West Nile virus.

“Our medical teams at the prison will be closely watching for signs of the virus and be prepared if there is an infection,” said Dr. Michelle Hofmann, executive medical director for the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, which now oversees medical services at the state prisons.

Mosquitoes carrying the West Nile virus are most active 30 minutes before sunset, one hour after sunset, and one hour after sunrise. Heightened vigilance has been advised during these peak times.

“While we are not seeing an immediate threat from this early detection, given the prison’s close proximity to the mosquito habitat and potentially infected mosquitoes, we want to ensure that everyone continues to be vigilant,” said Dr. Ary Faraji with SLCMAD. “We truly appreciate UDC’s collaborative efforts over the past year, and we will continue our surveillance and control measures at the prison and direct coordination with stakeholders.”

UDC has been coordinating closely with SLCMAD since the move to the new correctional facility in July 2022.

One of the cornerstone measures implemented this year is larviciding. This involves treating water bodies with specialized insecticides to kill mosquito larvae before they mature. UDC staff have been trained by SLCMAD in carrying out this process, particularly focusing on storm drains throughout the facility.

In addition to larviciding, SLCMAD has also set up mosquito traps on the grounds to monitor and control the adult mosquito population. SLCMAD is also identifying mosquito species and potential larval habitats.

One effective strategy has been the elimination of standing water sources, such as puddles, ponds, and drainage areas, which are potential larval habitats for mosquitoes.

You can learn more about the collaboration between UDC and SLCMAD here: <https://corrections.utah.gov/2023/04/26/udc-provides-update-on-mosquito-abatement-efforts-at-uscf/>

You can learn more about the West Nile virus here: <https://epi.utah.gov/west-nile-virus/>

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