

Traveling Increases Exposure

By K. H. SUTHERLAND, M.D.,
County Health Officer

Recent headlines have carried reports of a serious outbreak of mosquito-borne encephalitis in Texas. There have also been notices of a sprinkling of similar cases in other states.

Because of the frequency of business and vacation travel to and from other parts of the country, many residents of this area have been calling the health department for information and advice in relation to this situation. Geographic point of concern is Houston, Texas, which has been hardest hit in the current outbreak.

The degree of risk of encountering the disease in Houston would vary with one's activities. Chances of exposure to encephalitis is increased as one engages in outdoor activities where mosquitos abound. Conversely, opportunity for exposure to disease-carrying mosquitos becomes unlikely if a person stays in a hotel, attends business meetings in air conditioned offices, eats in restaurants, goes to the movies or theater and, for the most part, stays indoors.

PEOPLE WHO must be exposed to heavy infestation of mosquitos in the Houston area would be well advised to use practical means—such as screens, netting and insect sprays—to exclude mosquitos from their dwellings and to use insect repellent on their persons.

Residents of the Los Angeles area need have no worry about the spread of the disease to our community. So far as is known to date, there has never been a case of mosquito-borne encephalitis contracted by any person in Los Angeles County, though there have been a few cases reported in horses in past years. There are none known to be present currently.

ENCEPHALITIS, like many medical terms, is a very general one. It means "inflammation of the brain". Anthropod-borne encephalitis (that carried by mosquitos) sometimes strikes horses, sometimes man, sometimes both in the same outbreak. A person or animal becomes infected when bitten by a mosquito carrying the disease virus. Because of its transmission by mosquitos and the explosive nature of some of the outbreaks of this type of encephalitis, the disease takes on special public health importance.

Cases of encephalitis which are occasionally reported here are not of a communicable type. Sometimes brain inflammation—encephalitis—may be an aftermath of other illness. This type of encephalitis cannot be spread from person to person.

Prevention of mosquito-borne encephalitis and other diseases of man in which the mosquito is the vector (carrier) is the reason for the mosquito control programs of the health department and its insistence that private property, as well as public lands, be kept free of mosquito breeding sources. In Los Angeles this prevention has paid the dividend of freedom from epidemic encephalitis.

New Officers For Spanish Club Seated

Amistad y Ayuda, South Bay Spanish-speaking club, will hold its first fall meeting Thursday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Brand, 105 Calle de Arboles. The meeting will begin at 8 p.m.

Brand is the new president of the group, which is now beginning its third year of service to needy family in Tecate, Mexico.

Club activities include Spanish oriented cultural and social activities as well as philanthropies in the state of Baja California, Mexico.

Other officers for the new year include: Mrs. Dix Robbie, vice president; Mrs. Alice Smith, secretary, and Mrs. Eunice Schreuder, treasurer.

Persons interested in membership or additional information should call Brand at FR 8-4117.



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