



Public Health Press Release

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Wet Weather Brings Mosquito Worries

Jackson, Ca. Increased rain means an abundance of mosquitoes. Amador County Public Health Department urges community members to use preventive measures against West Nile Virus (WNV).

Mosquitoes can carry organisms that cause disease in humans. Here in California the main disease is West Nile Virus which is transmitted by the bite of a mosquito infected with the virus.

Mild symptoms in people infected with WNV include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Most people recover without treatment but a small percentage can become very ill with neurological symptoms. Serious symptoms in less than 1% of those infected with WNV can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. The only treatment is supportive. People over the age of 50 have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms when infected with West Nile virus.

Being outside, especially at dawn or at dusk, increases your risk of being bitten by an infected mosquito. Take precautions to avoid mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or for recreation. Apply a repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 before going outside. Always follow the label directions carefully and reapply as necessary. Wearing a long sleeved shirt and long pants are other helpful prevention measures.

Longer days and warmer nights mean more outdoor activities for you and your family. It can also mean more chances of being bitten by mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus.

But protecting yourself and your family from mosquito bites is easy. When spending time outdoors:

- ⇒ Know that dawn and dusk are the times of day when mosquitoes carrying WNV bite the most.
- ⇒ Apply a repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 before going outside. Always follow the label directions carefully and reapply as necessary.
- ⇒ Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants.
- ⇒ For more information on mosquito repellents visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/repellentupdates.htm>
- ⇒ Horse owners are urged to consult their veterinarian to ensure each horse is current on West Nile Virus vaccinations.

It is also important to practice mosquito control methods to aid in reducing mosquito-breeding sites:

- ⇒ Drain old tires and eliminating standing water in rain gutters, buckets or other containers where mosquitoes can breed.
- ⇒ Empty and change the water in bird baths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels, and potted plant trays at least once a week to destroy potential mosquito habitats.
- ⇒ Keep swimming pool water treated and circulating.

Wet Weather Brings Mosquito Worries (cont.)

It is also important for owners not to forget about their horses. Like people, most horses bitten by mosquitoes will not become sick with WNV. However, of those that do, clinical signs may include loss of appetite, stumbling, circling, hind leg weakness, inability to stand, muscle tremors, and death. A vaccine to prevent West Nile virus is available for horses. Horse owners should consult with their veterinarian about WNV vaccine and other vaccines against mosquito-borne viruses, such as western equine encephalitis. For more information on West Nile Virus and horses, please visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture website at <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov>.

Eliminating potential mosquito-breeding sites is also important. Drain old tires and eliminate standing water in rain gutters, buckets or other containers where mosquitoes can breed. Empty and change the water in bird baths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels, and potted plant trays at least once a week to destroy potential mosquito habitats. Keep swimming pool water treated and circulating. Currently Amador County does not operate a mosquito abatement program, therefore it is crucial for county residents to do their part.

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