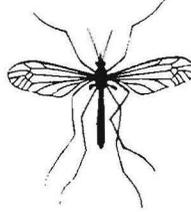


FACTS ABOUT

WEST NILE VIRUS



VENTURA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION
805/654-2816
www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth

YOU MAY BE RAISING MOSQUITOES!

The public can help reduce mosquito populations around their homes by eliminating standing water. Start with a thorough inspection of where you live to determine sources of standing water.

Here are some places to check:

- 1. Water-holding containers of any kind:**
Get rid of old tires, tin cans, bottles, jars, buckets, drums, etc. - or keep them empty. Small boats, wheelbarrows, etc. should be stored upside down.
- 2. Wading pools/swimming pools:**
Children's wading pools should be emptied weekly and stored indoors or upside down when not in use. Infrequently used swimming pools should be emptied or tightly covered. Backwash from pools should be properly disposed of and not allowed to puddle on the ground. When the pool is drained, do so properly so that no run-off is allowed to accumulate.
- 3. Pet dishes, birdbaths:**
Empty watering pans of pets and other animals daily; change water in birdbaths twice weekly. Animal pens/paddocks should be kept cleaned and maintained free from any standing water.
- 4. Cut flowers and plant cuttings:**
Change water in vases holding flowers or cuttings twice each week (both inside and outside the house), or grow cuttings in sand.
- 5. Roofs and gutters:**
Check eave-troughs and rain gutters to see if any are stopped up or sagging. Flat roofs should also be checked for standing water and roof drains inspected to insure they are free of obstructions.
- 6. Leaky faucets and hoses:**
Repair all leaking exterior faucets, hose bibs, hose nozzles, and hose connections.
- 7. Drainage basins:**
Monitor "sump pump" pits, dry wells, or drainage basins to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed.
- 8. Septic systems:**
Insure that septic systems are operating properly and are not overflowing. Failed septic systems must be repaired or connected to a community sewer system when and where available.
- 9. Ornamental ponds:**
Consider stocking ponds with fish. Certain fish will feed on mosquito larvae.
- 10. Brooks and drains:**
Be sure not to dump trash, leaves, grass or tree trimmings in brooks and drains to allow water to flow as freely as possible.
- 11. Hollow tree stumps:**
Fill hollow stumps with sand so that standing water cannot collect.

IF MOSQUITOES STILL BOTHER YOU

If you are sure that you have taken sufficient action to minimize mosquitoes around your home, but you are continually bothered by them, the source may be distant from your home. These problems should be reported to the Ventura County Environmental Health Division by calling 805/654-2816.

MOSQUITO FISH

The Ventura County Environmental Health Division provides mosquito-eating fish free of charge. If you have a fish pond, water trough, or unused swimming pool, call 805/662-6582 to request some mosquito-eating fish. These fish should be stocked in the spring or early summer. Goldfish usually won't eat mosquito larvae and pupae.

WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that has been found in parts of Asia, eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The virus was first detected in the United States in 1999 when an outbreak occurred in New York City. Since then WNV has spread across the country and has now reached Ventura County.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN PEOPLE?

Most people who are infected with WNV have no symptoms. Those who become ill may have symptoms such as fever, headache, nausea, body aches, mild skin rash, or swollen lymph nodes. In a few cases, the disease will progress to a more serious illness such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and can be fatal. The time between the mosquito bite and the onset of illness, known as the incubation period, ranges from 5-15 days in humans. There is no specific treatment for infection with WNV, although supportive medical care is important.

HOW DO PEOPLE AND ANIMALS GET WEST NILE VIRUS?

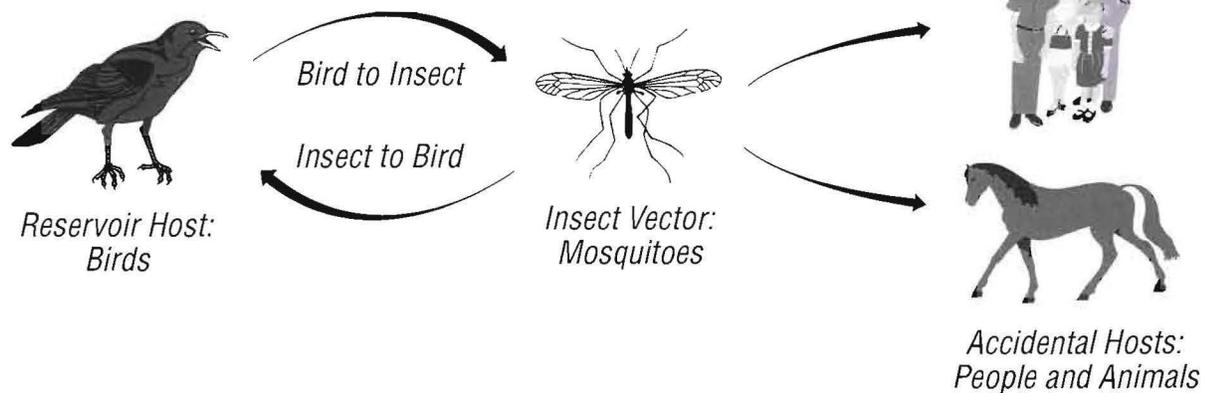
West Nile Virus is transmitted to people and animals through the bite of infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when feeding on wild birds with WNV in their blood. Only certain species of mosquitoes carry the virus and very few mosquitoes are actually infected. Once a mosquito becomes infected, it can pass the virus on when biting a person or animal. The virus is most prevalent from May to October when mosquitoes are most abundant.

WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION

To decrease exposure to mosquitoes and the WNV:

1. Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.
2. When outdoors, wear long pants, long sleeve shirts and other protective clothing.
3. Apply insect repellent according to the label instructions. DEET-containing repellents are recommended.
4. Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

TRANSMISSION CYCLE OF WEST NILE VIRUS



WHICH ANIMALS GET WEST NILE VIRUS?

The disease most often affects birds, but occasionally causes disease in other animals as well.

Birds

Wild birds are the primary reservoirs of WNV in the environment. WNV infection has been reported in more than 100 bird species. Many birds infected with WNV will not appear ill, however, the virus can cause serious illness and death in some birds, especially among the corvid birds, which include crows, jays, ravens, and magpies.

Horses

Like people, most horses bitten by infected mosquitoes will not become sick with WNV. Horses that become ill may have symptoms such as stumbling, circling, hind leg weakness, inability to stand, muscle tremors, and death. A vaccine to prevent WNV illness in horses is available from veterinarians. For more information on WNV and horses, please visit the website at www.cdфа.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/wnv_info.htm

WHAT DO I DO IF I SEE A DEAD BIRD?

If you find a dead bird, particularly a crow, jay, magpie, or raven, please promptly call the California Department of Health Services (DHS) at the number shown below. Do not touch the bird. DHS will record all dead bird reports and will arrange for pickup and laboratory testing for WNV when appropriate.

Toll Free Phone: 877/WNV-BIRD (877/968-2473)

E-mail: arbovirus@dhs.ca.gov

Website: www.westnile.ca.gov

VENTURA COUNTY VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM

Ventura County vector control technicians routinely monitor over 1,400 mosquito-breeding sources and use target-specific pesticides when mosquito breeding is observed. These sources are located in and adjacent to urban areas throughout the county. Ventura County also participates in the statewide mosquito-borne disease surveillance program.

MOSQUITO FACTS

1. All mosquitoes need water to develop. Adult flying mosquitoes frequently rest in grass, shrubbery or other foliage, but they never develop there.
2. Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water where they hatch in a day or two.
3. Other mosquitoes lay their eggs in old tires, tin cans, or other water holding containers where they may remain unhatched for weeks or months until they are covered with water.
4. With both types of mosquitoes, the wigglers (larvae) grow quickly and turn into tumblers (pupae).
5. Mosquitoes can develop from eggs to adults in 7 to 10 days.