

MAFES Dawg Tracks



June 4, 2007

Fight the Bite: Protection Against West Nile Virus



Mississippians love hot weather and mosquitoes! We've had both of them all of our lives, so we have to like them or like to hate both of them. Hot weather we can tolerate, but the mosquitoes are bad company.

The Mississippi Department of Health urges all Mississippians to avoid mosquito bites when at all possible. The risk of a healthy person getting West Nile virus from a mosquito bite is very low, but protection remains important to all Mississippians.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. However, there have been isolated cases occurring in blood transfusion and organ donation recipients, from mother to baby during pregnancy, and through breast milk. People cannot be affected through ordinary contact with an infected bird, horse, or human.

PROTECT YOURSELF:

- Avoid mosquitoes whenever possible. It is recommended to stay indoors (not very possible when work is necessary). We can take personal protective measures.
- Use mosquito repellent with DEET. Products with up to 30% DEET will provide adequate protection under most conditions. Use DEET with 10% or less concentration for kids from 2 to 10 yrs. of age, according to the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Consult your physician for kids under 2 yrs. old.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long-legged pants with socks and shoes whenever possible.
- If you should have to handle a dead bird or mammal, wear gloves to ward off the possibility of catching any diseases.

PROTECT YOUR HOME-PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING AROUND YOUR HOUSE:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, old unused ceramic pots, or other objects that hold water.

- Remove old and unused tires from the property. Old tires lying around are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- Remove all leaf debris.
- Keep lids on garbage cans to prevent rainwater from collecting in the bottom.
- If you have recycling containers around, drill holes in the bottom to allow the water to drain out and not stand in the bottom.
- Make sure that roof gutters are clean and work properly.
- Turn over wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change water in birdbaths 2 to 3 times each week.
- Clean vegetation and debris away from the edges of ponds.
- Drain the water off of pool covers.
- If you have low-lying areas on the property, either fill in or use landscaping to protect it from standing water.
- Repair damaged door or window screens.
- Clean and chlorinate pools, saunas, or hot tubs weekly.
- Remove unused pet food containers and water dishes for the obvious reasons.
- Flush livestock water troughs a couple of times each week.
- Check around building or construction sites for low-lying areas where water might stand and take some corrective action to back fill or level it out.

PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY:

- Call your local health department if you find dead birds that are suspect. The number is in the white pages under Health Department.
- If you deem it necessary to submit the birds to the Health Department, use gloves and double bag the specimens. Don't touch the bird without hand protection.
- Alert your city or township government if you should observe a problem with mosquito controls.
- Be a **Good Neighbor** – Help your city and neighbors with their mosquito control problems.

SAFETY RULES ARE YOUR BEST TOOLS!

SAFETY IS NEVER OUT OF SEASON!!