

## Healthwatch: Protect Yourself from Potentially Deadly Mosquitoes!

Summer's here and so are the bugs. The West Nile Virus has been discovered in a few dead birds in San Diego County. Thankfully, there have been **no** reports of the virus in humans in this area. Symptoms may be nondescript, including high fever for greater than 1 week, headache, rash, and neurological symptoms (seizures, paralysis, etc.). West Nile Virus can be fatal. PPH Faith Partnership has provided the following checklist to help keep this potentially deadly virus from breeding close to home:

### MOSQUITO PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- Birdbaths: Clean weekly
- Chain link fence: Cap uncapped fence pipes
- Containers: cover or turn upside down
- Decorative ponds: Stock with mosquito eating fish that eat larvae
- Drains: Keep outdoor drains flowing freely
- Dumpsters: Keep covered and remove and water inside or underneath them.
- Flat roofs: Inspect for puddles after it rains
- Irrigation: Do not over water, and repair areas with standing water. Fix leaky faucets and hoses.
- Machinery: Cover and clean any areas that may hold water
- Playground: Drill drainage holes in tire swings and playground equipment that holds water
- Pools/spas: Drain, cover, or stock mosquito fish in unused pools and spas
- Potted plants: Do not over water and empty saucers weekly
- Rain gutters: Clean out debris so water flows freely
- Tires: Dispose or drill holes for water drainage
- Tool Sheds: Eliminate water around foundation
- Trash cans: Clean weekly and keep covered
- Unused pipes: Store flat so no water collects
- Water troughs for animals: Replace water weekly, stock larger animal troughs with mosquito fish.
- Wheelbarrows: Store upright so water does not collect
  
- Clothing: wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when around active mosquito areas
- Dawn/dusk: Avoid going outdoors if possible because mosquitoes are most active during this time of day
- DEET: Apply insect repellent to exposed skin when mosquitoes are active. *(See below for kid safe use)*
- Screens: install or repair tight fitting window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Shrubs: Trim and thin shrubs and bushy plants where mosquitoes tend to hide
- Dead birds: Report dead birds within 24 hours to (888) 551-INFO (4636)
- BTI: A natural bacteria that kills mosquito and fly larvae, but will not hurt animals. It can be put into standing water to prevent development of larvae. Available in hardware and garden stores.

Both the Academy of Pediatrics and the EPA recommend the following precautions when using insect repellents on children:

- Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use repellents under clothing.
- Never use repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- Do not apply to eyes or mouth, and apply sparingly around ears. When using sprays, do not spray directly on face — spray on hands first and then apply to face.

- Do not allow children to handle the product. When using on children, apply to your own hands first and then put it on the child. Do not apply to children's hands.
- Use just enough repellent to cover exposed skin and/or clothing. Heavy application and saturation generally are unnecessary for effectiveness.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water or bathe. This is particularly important when repellents are used repeatedly in a day or on consecutive days. Also, wash treated clothing before wearing it again.
- If a child develops a rash or other apparent allergic reaction from an insect repellent, stop using the repellent, wash it off with mild soap and water and call a local poison control center for further guidance.
- Repellents are not recommended for children younger than 2 months of age.

AAP Committee on Environmental Health. Pesticides. In Etzel RA, ed. *Pediatric Environmental Health*.

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