

# May

Division of Environmental Services

## Safety message

### ...from the Division Chief

Spring is a time of rebirth and renewed vigor, not just for us but also for those less loved creatures of nature--parasites. In spring, precipitation and warm temperatures combine to create ideal breeding conditions for mosquitos which are vectors for nefarious diseases such as West Nile virus. There have been no human cases of West Nile virus in California this year, but as of April 10<sup>th</sup>, 5 dead birds and 2 mosquitos in the state have tested positive for West Nile virus. Alameda and Santa Clara counties are where 4 of 5 West Nile virus infected birds have been found. The mosquito season has definitely begun!

In spring, precipitation and warm temperatures *also* combine to create ideal conditions for field work to commence for many DES studies. With this in mind, DES staff should account for mosquito and other seasonal hazard when planning their studies. If possible, make adjustments to minimize contact with mosquitoes, and when working in mosquito conditions, take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from the bite!

Please review the tips in this month's safety message to keep you and your family safe from mosquito-borne disease.

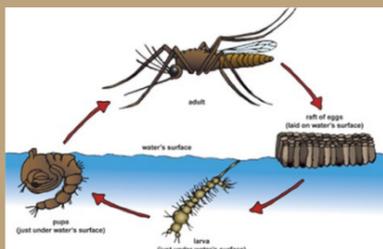
Sincerely,  
Dean Messer, Chief  
Division of Environmental Services

### Know the Symptoms:

Mosquitoes can transmit diseases which cause encephalitis (e.g. West Nile virus, Western Equine Encephalomyelitis virus, and St. Louis Encephalitis) and parasites (e.g. malaria, canine heartworm). West Nile virus is now the most prevalent mosquito-borne disease in the United States. Most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will show no symptoms (about 80%), but 20% of people develop West Nile Fever. People typically develop symptoms from 3 to 14 days after they are bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms are similar to the flu and pass within a few days.

These include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body ache
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting
- Eye pain or swollen lymph glands
- Occasional skin rash on chest, stomach, and back



Rarely, in 1% of infected people, severe symptoms occur and can result in coma or death. If you develop symptoms of severe West Nile virus illness, such as unusually severe headaches, convulsions, vision loss, paralysis, or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

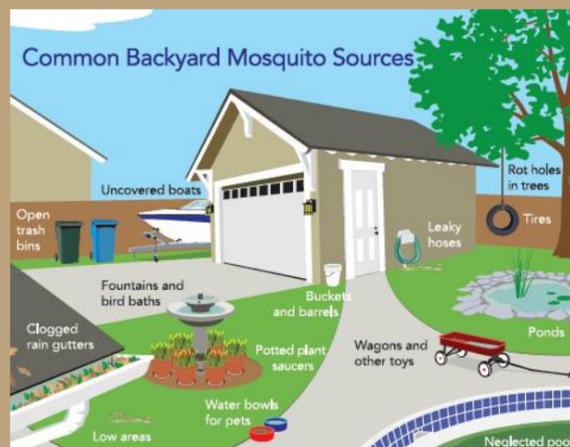
### Did you know that ... ?

'Mosquito' means 'little fly' in Spanish.

- A small bucket of stagnant water can produce 1,000 mosquitoes per week.
- In warm temperatures, mosquitoes can complete their life cycle in 7 to 10 days.
- A mosquito can smell the carbon dioxide you exhale from about 60 to 75 feet away.
- Mosquitoes can fly about 1 to 1.5 miles per hour.
- Before feeding, the mosquito probes the skin as much as 20 times.
- An adult mosquito can live as long as 5 months.
- A mosquito's wings beat about 600 times per second!



### Prevent Mosquito Production and Access to Your Home:



- Dump or drain water that has been standing for more than three days.
- Clean clogged rain gutters and street gutters to remove standing water.
- Repair torn screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes from entering your home.

### Protect Yourself:

- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when outside.
- Use a repellent containing the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 before going outdoors.



### Do Your Part for the Community:

Visit <http://www.fightthebite.net/> to report a dead bird or report a neglected mosquito-harboring pool.

Learn more by visiting <http://www.fightthebite.net/> and <http://westnile.ca.gov/>.

### Safety Suggestion Box:



A Black widow spider was found in the warehouse. It is recommended that you wear gloves when moving items in the warehouse.

Think Safety visit <http://dessafety.water.ca.gov>; <http://swpsafety.water.ca.gov> for more information.  
Safety suggestions to: [dessafety@water.ca.gov](mailto:dessafety@water.ca.gov).