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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION EFFORTS BEGAN TODAY**

A rainy start to May brings ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus. That's why the Westchester County Department of Health began applying larvicide to catch basins throughout the County and reminds residents to eliminate standing water from around their properties to keep mosquitoes away.

"County government proactively larvicides to prevent disease-carrying mosquitos from breeding and with the help of our residents and business owners, we can continue to avoid the need to spray pesticides and still have few human cases of West Nile Virus," said County Executive Andy Spano.

Large areas of standing water that cannot easily be removed should be reported to the Health Department by calling (914) 813-5000 or by logging onto [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health) and completing an online form.

"Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus likely do so right in their own backyards," said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health. "Discarded tires, unchlorinated swimming pools, outdoor pottery, sand pails and birdbaths are popular breeding sites for mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus. That's why it is so important that everyone walk around your property routinely and dump out standing water from any containers throughout the spring and summer."

Starting today 24 staff from the Westchester County Department of Health began applying briquettes of the larvicide Altosid (methoprene) into state, county and local municipal catch basins to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult mosquitoes. They will be working on this through early July. Also, on a case-by-case basis, the control agents Vectolex CG, Vectobag G and Bactimos Briquettes may also be used. The certified technicians started with municipal storm water catch basins in the northern part of the

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county and work their way south until all 66,000 catch basins in Westchester that are capable of containing standing water have been larvicided.

Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile Virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days. Mosquitoes will breed in any untreated water, so the Health Department recommends you:

- Remove unneeded tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover trash containers to keep rain out.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Remove standing water from basements.
- Place a couple of capfuls of household bleach in a basement sump-pump pit if it has standing water.
- Keep drains, culverts and streams clean of weeds and trash so that water can drain properly.
- Make sure stored boat covers are completely drained. Store small boats upside down.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Trim shrubs to eliminate hiding places for adult mosquitoes.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs. Be sure rainwater does not collect on their covers and disinfect them with bleach to kill mosquito larvae and eggs.
- Fill in hollow tree stumps and rot holes that hold water with sand or concrete.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.

For more information about larviciding and West Nile Virus, go to [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health) or call the Health Department at (914) 813-5000.