

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

CONTACT: MARY LANDRIGAN

(914) 813-5013
(914) 813-5000 After Hours

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 20, 2006

NOW IS THE TIME TO AVOID MOSQUITO BITES
Peak Season for West Nile Virus Approaching

The Westchester County Department of Health reminds residents to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and to eliminate sources of standing water around their homes as a way to decrease the chance of getting West Nile Virus.

Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester County Commissioner of Health said, "Although the County has a comprehensive mosquito control program in place which has been successful in curbing the mosquito population over the last few years, the prevention of West Nile virus ultimately rests with residents." "In order to prevent West Nile virus, it is imperative that everyone take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites when enjoying the great outdoors."

The Westchester County Department of Health is urging residents to take the following preventive measures this summer:

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellants that contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when outdoors in such areas at those times. Adults should use repellents with no more than 30% DEET. Use 10% or less DEET for children. Do not use DEET on infants. Insect repellants should be applied especially at dusk and evening hours when mosquitoes are most likely to bite. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.

More

Pg. 2 WNV Prevention

- Make sure doors and windows in your home have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes so that mosquitoes cannot get inside.

Another important aspect of West Nile virus prevention is the elimination of standing water. 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 doing the following around your home:

- Rid your property of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers
- Remove discarded tires
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly
- Sweep your driveway after it rains so that it is free of puddles
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs and drain water that collects on their covers.

The Westchester County Department of Health also encourages residents to report any standing water that they identify which cannot be easily eliminated. Reports of standing water can be made to the Health Department by calling (914) 813-5000 or by entering the pertinent information into forms provided on the Health Department's website at www.westchestergov.com/health. Additional information about mosquito control and West Nile virus prevention can also be found on the Health Department's website.