



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AFTER THE RAIN, FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO DISCOURAGE AND AVOID WEST NILE VIRUS

Following today's thunderstorms and Saturday's soaking by Tropical Storm Hanna, the Westchester County Health Department reminds residents to look around their yards and remove standing water to avoid creating ideal conditions for mosquitoes to breed.

Now through October is prime time for West Nile Virus, which is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. So far, there have been no reported human cases of West Nile Virus in Westchester, but there have been nine positive mosquito batches throughout Westchester.

In Nassau County, 11 people have tested positive for West Nile virus and three of them have died. So far, in New York City, seven people have tested positive for West Nile virus and one of them died.

"Residents should remain vigilant in their efforts to reduce their risk of West Nile Virus, particularly now, during peak mosquito season by eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites around their homes," said Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman. "Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. These eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of untreated water left undisturbed for more than four days."

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.

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- Turn over plastic wading pools, buckets and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice a week.
- 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 from their covers.

To further protect yourself against mosquito bites, take these steps:

- Avoid being outdoors in the late afternoon and early evening when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellents with no more than 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when outdoors in such areas at those times. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under 2 months of age. Insect repellents should be used 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.

The Health Department will continue with mosquito surveillance efforts throughout the county, as well as in the areas where these positive mosquito batches were found. Efforts will include mosquito trapping and testing as well as surveying catch basins for mosquito larvae or standing water.

Under County Executive Andy Spano's mosquito control program, *Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G.* (Stop The Insect's Next Generation), the County has applied larvicide to catch basins countywide to kill immature mosquitoes. Residents who notice large areas of standing water that could serve as potential mosquito breeding grounds should report this information to the Health Department by calling (914) 813-5000 or online through its Internet site, www.westchestergov.com/health. Residents may also keep current with research on alternative insect repellents by visiting the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov.