

West Nile Virus - Who's at risk?

Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G. is a strategy County Executive Andy Spano put in place to address the West Nile encephalitis outbreak. It is designed to track and control mosquitoes at an early stage to prevent West Nile illness in residents of Westchester County.

Statistics show that:

- ▶ People who are over 50 years of age who contract West Nile Virus are at increased risk of developing more severe symptoms, including encephalitis.
- ▶ Younger adults and children are at a lower risk for developing the more severe symptoms of West Nile Virus, including encephalitis.

Symptoms of West Nile encephalitis include:

- ▶ High fever, headache, confusion, muscle aches and weakness, seizures, or paralysis. At its most serious, the infection can result in coma, permanent neurological damage and death.
- ▶ Symptoms usually occur five to 15 days following the bite of an infected mosquito. Because West Nile encephalitis is a viral infection, antibiotics are not effective and there is no specific treatment available.

West Nile encephalitis is a mosquito-borne illness transmitted through the bite of a mosquito, which may become infected with the virus by feeding on an infected bird. West Nile encephalitis is a viral infection of the brain caused by West Nile virus, a serious or even fatal illness.

THE BEST WAY TO AVOID WEST NILE ENCEPHALITIS IS TO AVOID MOSQUITO BITES!

What can you do to reduce your risk of mosquito bites?

- Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

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- Use insect repellent with no more than 30% DEET, but use it sparingly and with care. Products which do not contain DEET may be less effective. Products containing 10% or less DEET are recommended for children, but products containing DEET should not be used on infants.

- Avoid areas at times and in places when and where mosquitoes are active and feeding. This generally means wooded, brushy, wet or boggy areas, or marshes, but use common sense if mosquitoes are present in other areas.

Mosquito Control In and Around Your House

Mosquitoes NEED stagnant or standing water to lay their eggs. To reduce the mosquito population around your home and property, reduce or eliminate all stagnant water.

- Check your property and remove any water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.

- Check your screens to ensure that your home has tight-fitting screens over windows and doors to keep mosquitoes from entering apartments and homes. Be sure that all screens are in good repair.

- Place a couple of capfuls of household bleach in your basement sump-pump pit if it has standing water.

- Keep drains, culverts, ponds and streams on your property clean of weeds and trash so that the water will drain properly.

- Drain the water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.

- Clean your roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.

- Remove standing water from your basement.

- Keep your grass cut short and trim your shrubs to eliminate hiding places for adult mosquitoes.

- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. Be sure rainwater does not collect on pool, sauna, or hot tub covers. You should disinfect cover with bleach to kill 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.

In addition to reducing potential breeding sites on your own property, you can