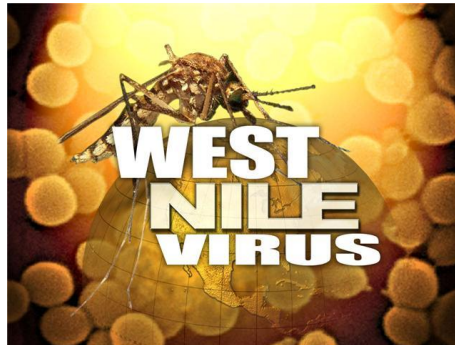


West Nile Virus Season is here Again; Are You Prepared?

PART I



It's that time of year again...West Nile Virus season. Kings County's mosquito season is typically from April 1 to October 31. Are you prepared? I don't know when the last time it was that *you* purchased repellent, but they now have unscented along with a very nice smelling scent as well. Sprays, lotions, creams, wipes, plug-ins. Wow! What a variety! That's right, we now have a choice! You don't have to be forced to use the stuff we had as kids. That stuff smelled so bad you never wanted to go outside if it meant never having to use it.

This year Kings County has seen some heavy rains, and with that comes the potential for increased breeding grounds for mosquitoes. More breeding grounds equal a higher risk of West Nile Virus. Please be cautious of your surroundings.

As of this writing, in California, the West Nile Virus has been detected in five dead birds in three different counties; three in Los Angeles, one in Butte and one in Sacramento. Therefore, its presence has reared its ugly head already. Luckily, there are no reported human cases to date.

Just What Is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus that is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. West Nile virus is carried by many types of birds including sparrows, robins, crows, and at least 100 other species. A mosquito becomes infected by biting an infected bird that carries the virus. **West Nile is not spread by person-to-person contact**, nor is it transmitted directly from birds or other animals to people. West Nile virus can affect horses causing serious disease with a high death rate, but there is an effective vaccine available for horses. Fortunately, dogs and cats are resistant to the infection.

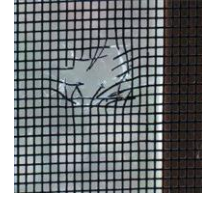
What Should I Look For?

Mosquitoes can breed in a very small amount of standing water. Eggs are laid and immature mosquitoes can develop in places such as dirty pools and spas, ponds, birdbaths, old tires, barrels, clogged rain gutters, flower pots, and pet bowls, just to name a few. If you have children's toys outside, you might want to give those a look-see as well. **Mosquitoes only need one teaspoon of water to breed!** **Your first duty in preparedness is to**



eliminate all standing water sources in an around where you live.

Next, it would be a good idea for you to check your door and window screens for any holes or openings through which a mosquito can enter your home. What about the space under the doors? If you cannot find those attachable door flaps that will work with your door, a good old-fashioned towel strategically shoved under will suffice.



Avoid Mosquito Bites

■ Use Insect Repellent

If you need to be outside during their active time, please make sure you use mosquito repellent. The CDC recommends these products:

- **DEET** (Chemical Name: N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N, N-diethyl-3-methyl-benzamide)
- **Picaridin** (KBR 3023, Chemical Name: 2-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperidinecarboxylic acid 1-methylpropyl ester)
- **Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or PMD** (Chemical Name: para-Menthane-3,8-diol) the synthesized version of oil of lemon eucalyptus
- **IR3535** (Chemical Name: 3-[N-Butyl-N-acetyl]-aminopropionic acid, ethyl ester)



These active ingredients typically provide reasonably long-lasting protection. For information on repellent active ingredients, see (http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/mosquitoes/ai_insectrp.htm).

***** As with any chemical substance, please make sure to read the labels before you apply repellent, especially on children. *****

■ Proper Clothing Can Make A Difference

Weather permitting, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent will give you that extra-added protection.



■ Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

Dawn and dusk are the most active times for mosquitoes. Please be extra careful when outdoors during this time. Depending on where you live and what the situation is, you might want to reconsider going outdoors during these times. To see if there are any local prevention efforts in your area, click on the contacts site: the [Links to State and Local Government Sites](#)

NEXT WEEK- Part 2: Symptoms, treatment, resources and closing remarks.

References:

Kings County Office of Emergency Management- www.kingscountyem.com

California West Nile Virus Website- www.westnile.ca.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

Drug Information Online- www.drugs.com

California Department of Food and Agriculture- <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/>