



MVCAC
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California

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With Zika Taking Center Stage, We Can't Forget About West Nile Virus
National Mosquito Control and Awareness Week is a Reminder to Californians

SACRAMENTO, June 24, 2016 – By now we are all very aware of the Zika virus that has continued to make headlines in the United States over the past several months. With much of the attention on Zika, it is important not to forget about the continued threat of West Nile virus (WNV).

WNV is responsible for hundreds of reported cases each year. It can cause severe disease that infects peoples' nervous system, potentially resulting in death. In 2015, in California alone, 53 people were killed by the virus and 783 cases were confirmed.

As June 26 – July 2 has been declared National Mosquito Control Awareness Week by the American Mosquito Control Association, now is an ideal time to remind individuals that Zika virus is not the only mosquito-borne threat. This week is intended to educate the general public about the significance of mosquitoes in their daily lives and the important service provided by mosquito control workers throughout the United States and worldwide.

“Californians need to always remain on high alert. National Mosquito Awareness Week is another opportunity to increase local education and awareness throughout California to help protect residents and communities from potentially fatal mosquito-borne diseases, especially West Nile virus” stated Kenn Fujioka, President of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC). “While we are mindful of the ongoing developments with Zika, it remains our job to protect residents and prevent all mosquito transmitted diseases,” added Fujioka.

In addition to California's record-breaking West Nile virus activity, several invasive mosquito species capable of transmitting deadly diseases have been discovered in California in recent years and are now permanently established in some communities. Their presence here – and their capability to transmit a number of life-threatening diseases such as chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever, and Zika -- pose an increasing threat to Californians. While these diseases have not been locally acquired in California to date, efforts to control these mosquitoes create increasing challenges to public health agencies statewide.

Mosquito control agencies are critical to increasing awareness and protecting California's public health. However, effective mosquito control is not possible without the help of local residents. It is extremely important that residents to take all the necessary precautions to prevent mosquito breeding and protect themselves and their families.

To minimize exposure to mosquito bites and WNV, practice the “3 Ds:”

1. **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes capable of transmitting WNV are most active in the early morning and evening, so it important to wear protective clothing and repellent if you are outside during these times. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
3. **DRAIN** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including in flower pots, old car tires and buckets. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.

MVCAC represents more than 65 special districts and other subdivisions of state and local government which are responsible for mosquito and vector control, surveillance of WNV and other vector-borne diseases, and public education programs to help Californians protect themselves from mosquito-borne disease. Approximately half the land area and 85 percent of the population of California are within the boundaries of a mosquito control program. To these ends, MVCAC advocates safe, effective, and environmentally friendly methods of mosquito and vector control.

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