



MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL  
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

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**California's Warm Winter and Spring Create Perfect Conditions for Early Start to Mosquito Season**  
*West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week*  
*encourages prevention and protection from mosquito-borne viruses.*

**SACRAMENTO, APRIL 18, 2014** – Californians are being encouraged to put up their guard a little earlier this year when it comes to protection and prevention against a severe public health threat - mosquitoes.

The California State Legislature has declared April 20 – 26, 2014 as West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week in California. With the summer months fast approaching, now is the time to educate yourself and maintain the highest levels of awareness when it comes to mosquitoes and the deadly diseases they are capable of spreading.

Despite what some people may think, California's current drought conditions may actually create more mosquitoes than seasons with more rain water. Healthy rivers and lakes that flow with water are not good conditions for mosquitoes while dried, water-filled pockets with standing water make the perfect mosquito habitat. The warm weather, warm spring, and plenty of man-made water sources, such as neglected swimming pools, flowerpot saucers, and storm drains, have provided perfect conditions and habitat for mosquitoes to thrive.

During 2013, 372 individuals in 31 counties in California tested positive for West Nile virus. Of those, 245 people developed neuroinvasive disease and 14 people died. The State Department of Public Health and the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention anticipate West Nile virus will pose a similar public health threat again in 2014.

In addition to West Nile virus, mosquitoes routinely transmit at least six types of viruses and are capable of transmitting a number of exotic diseases that have had devastating effects in other places around the world.

"Californian's throughout the state need to be aware of the public health threat that exists as a direct result of mosquitoes. We need to continue employing local mosquito and vector control agencies and programs to educate local communities on best practices to prevent diseases borne by mosquitoes and other vectors," stated Bob Achermann, executive director of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California. "The threat is real and cannot be underestimated. We must remain diligent in our awareness efforts," continued Achermann.

To protect against mosquito- and vector-borne diseases, the following safety precautions are recommended by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH):

- Eliminate or manage all sources of standing water to discourage mosquito breeding.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and the first two hours after sunset.
- If you are outdoors when mosquitoes are biting wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Apply insect repellent containing EPA-registered active ingredients such as DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, and Oil of lemon eucalyptus (PMD). Always apply according to label instructions.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant problem or potential mosquito breeding source where you live or work.

To increase awareness and enforce prevention and control programs statewide, the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC) provides support to more than 65 districts throughout California. As a result, approximately half the land area and 85 percent of California's population are within the boundaries of a mosquito control program.

"It's our job to protect public health from mosquitoes and their associated diseases; however each and every resident must take personal responsibility to ensure mosquitoes are not produced on their property. They must also protect themselves by using proper mosquito repellents, ensuring properly maintained window and door screens, and reporting mosquito populations to their local mosquito control district. In this way, our communities will stay healthy and the risk of diseases from mosquitoes, such as West Nile virus, will be reduced," said Craig Downs, MVCAC president. "It is our job to enforce local programs, but we need the public's support in maintaining awareness and carrying out protection and prevention methods," Downs added.

MVCAC represents special districts, other subdivisions of local government, and the state of California which are responsible for mosquito and vector control, surveillance of West Nile virus and other vector-borne disease, as well as public education programs to help Californians protect themselves from disease. MVCAC advocates safe, effective, and environmentally friendly methods of mosquito and vector control.

The MVCAC will be participating in a public education effort at the State Capitol on Friday, April 26th from 9 am – 1 pm.

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