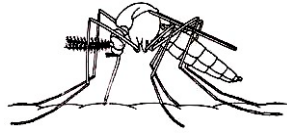


GENERAL INFORMATION ON WEST NILE VIRUS AND RELATED ACTIVITY IN BEAUMONT



GENERAL INFORMATION ON WEST NILE VIRUS AND OTHER MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS

What is mosquito-borne illness?

Mosquito-borne illness is an illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. In the Northeastern United States, it is usually caused by viruses such as West Nile Virus (WNV) or Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus (EEEV). There is a low risk of WNV infection following a mosquito bite. Most people bitten by infected mosquitoes experience no illness or only mild illness, but a small number of people can develop more serious disease.

How is it spread?

Mosquito-borne illness is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus from biting infected birds. People can't get the virus from another person or directly from an infected bird. However, you should use gloves when handling any dead animals and put them in double plastic bags before disposing of them in the trash.

Is it in Beaumont?

WNV appeared in Jefferson County for the first time in the summer of 2002. As of August 25, 2006, there have been eight (8) confirmed cases of WNV in Beaumont resulting in two (2) deaths.

Am I a risk of becoming sick from mosquito bites?

The time of the year when mosquitoes are most active and most likely to carry disease is between late July and late September, but if the weather remains warm, the risk period can extend as late as November. People at higher risk for developing serious symptoms from WNV are those over age 50, however EEEV causes serious illness in any age group.

What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus?

Most mosquitoes don't carry viruses that cause human illness, and the risk of illness following a mosquito bite is small. However, you should see your doctor immediately if you develop high fever, confusion, severe headache, stiff neck, or if your eyes become sensitive to light.

What should I do if I find a dead bird?

It has already been determined that West Nile Virus is in Jefferson County. If you find a dead bird, do not touch it. It is advised that you wear gloves and handle the bird with a shovel. For additional safety precautions, double bag the dead bird in plastic garbage bags and individually tie each bag. You may then dispose of the bag in a trash container. If you have any questions, any problems, or if you notice a large number of dead birds in one area, it is **very important that you notify Sherry Ulmer, Clinical Nurse Manager at the City of Beaumont Public Health Department at 409-832-4000 immediately**. Since mosquitoes transmit disease to people, an area with a large number of dead birds may become the focus of mosquito trapping and testing.

What can I do to protect myself?

The best way to protect yourself is to keep mosquitoes from biting you. Follow these steps if you live in or visit an area

with mosquitoes:

- Use a mosquito repellent. The most effective repellents contain DEET, but there are several DEET alternatives that have been approved by the EPA. Read the directions on the product label to find out about precautions that need to be taken and how often the product needs to be reapplied.
- If you use a product containing DEET, do not use concentrations of more than 35% on adults or more than 10% on children. Do not let children apply DEET to themselves. Do not apply DEET on infants.
- Wear protective clothing such as a long sleeved shirt, long pants and socks.
- Although mosquitoes can bite at any time of day, try to limit time outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active (or use above precautions).
- Make sure window and door screens don't have holes in them. Screens in good repair will help prevent mosquitoes from getting inside your house.

What can I do to reduce the number of mosquitoes around my neighborhood?

Mosquitoes need water to breed. They can develop into adults in as little as a week. Make sure that items like these below don't collect water or that you clean them out once a week.

- Containers - Empty bird baths, turn over or cover unused flower pots, buckets, garbage cans, and wheelbarrows.
- Gutters - Remove leaves and other debris that can clog gutters and trap water.
- Pools - Cover unused swimming pools and turn over kiddie pools when not in use. Be sure to keep swimming pool covers clear of leaves and water.
- Old Tires - Cover or dispose of them. They are one of mosquitoes' favorite places to breed.

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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409-832-4000



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