



County of Riverside
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Positive Test for West Nile Virus in Mosquitoes is First in Area This Year

Mosquitoes collected in the Nuevo area have tested positive for West Nile virus, the first time this year there has been a positive test in the western-county area served by the Riverside County Vector Control Program. It is not unusual for mosquitoes to test positive for West Nile virus, especially during the summer months.

The samples of mosquitoes were collected June 17th near Mystic Field. The Department's vector-control staff has intensified mosquito surveillance, as well efforts to control adult and larval mosquitoes in these areas to reduce the mosquito populations and interrupt the disease transmission cycle.

The positive test comes just days before the nineteenth annual National Mosquito Control Awareness Week begins on Sunday (June 21). Designated by the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA), the goal of week is to educate residents about how mosquitoes can affect their lives and the role played by mosquito-control workers in the United States and worldwide.

The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health Vector Control Program responds to complaints regarding mosquitoes. Technicians routinely look for stagnant water around neighborhoods where mosquitoes might breed. The department routinely sets traps that collect mosquitoes that are tested for diseases such as West Nile virus.

Mosquitoes can transmit diseases with their bites, but are also very pesky and can ruin our outdoor activities such as walking, bbqing and sporting events. You can help eliminate mosquitoes in your neighborhood by following some simple yet important steps. One of the easiest and most important steps is to remove any stagnant water around your property; empty pots, tarps, tools, tires and trash cans of any water that has collected because they are all breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Residents may attend community cleanups to get rid of unwanted tires and other debris that can collect water. Even small amounts can be a breeding site for hundreds of mosquitoes. Ponds or large livestock troughs that cannot easily be cleaned out every few days should be stocked with mosquito fish, which are made available at no charge to residents in the program's service area. For a list of community cleanups scheduled throughout Riverside County, go to <http://www.rivcowm.org/opencms/IllegalDumping/index.html#CCU>.

Other measures to take to protect yourself and your family include:

- Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30 percent or less on older children. Lemon eucalyptus oil should not be used on children under three years of age.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours. Dawn and dusk are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities planned for those hours.
- Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from skin.
- Mosquito-proof your home. Drain standing water, where mosquitos lay their eggs. Limit the number of breeding places by draining/discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools. Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls at least weekly.
- Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly fitting screens on all windows and doors.

Contact the Riverside County Vector Control program at (951) 766-9454 or your local vector-control district to report mosquito problems, request mosquito fish and report neglected pools or standing water as potential mosquito sources. Visit the department online at <http://www.rivcoeh.org/Programs/vector> for more information.

Interesting Facts

- Mosquitoes find hosts by sight (they observe movement); by detecting infra-red radiation emitted by warm bodies; and by chemical signals (mosquitoes are attracted to carbon dioxide and lactic acid, among other chemicals) at distances of 25 to 35 meters.
- Mosquitoes fly an estimated 1 to 1.5 miles per hour.
- Bigger people are often more attractive to mosquitoes because they are larger targets and they produce more mosquito attractants, namely CO₂ and lactic acid.
- Active or fidgety people also produce more CO₂ and lactic acid.
- Smelly feet are attractive to certain species of mosquitoes – as is Limburger Cheese.
- Dark clothing has been shown to attract some species of mosquitoes more than lighter colored clothing.