



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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WET WINTER AND WARM WEATHER MAY LEAD TO EARLY ARRIVAL OF MOSQUITO-BORNE VIRUSES IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

Mosquito Awareness Week educates residents on mosquito prevention and disease protection

INDIO, CA - APRIL 18, 2019: A combination of an unusually wet winter and a spike in temperatures could result in increased mosquito-borne virus activity, such as West Nile and St. Louis encephalitis. The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District is currently trapping twice the mosquitoes than is normal this time of year when compared to the 5-year average.

These factors point to an early and active mosquito season. To raise awareness and educate Californians about the public health threat mosquitoes pose to our communities, the California Legislature declared April 21-27, 2019 “Mosquito Awareness Week.”

In 2018, the District trapped more than 350,000 mosquitoes – the majority of which were species capable of transmitting viruses. While there were no reported cases of people infected with West Nile or St. Louis encephalitis viruses in the Coachella Valley last year, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reported 218 West Nile virus cases, 11 of them fatal.

“Mosquitoes can lay eggs in sources of water as small as a bottle cap and can complete their life cycle from egg to adult in about a week.” said Jeremy Wittie, General Manager of the District and president of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California. We urge residents to dump and drain all standing water to eliminate mosquitoes and help protect public health.”

As part of the state’s Mosquito Awareness Week activities, the District will begin rolling out a new look, including a new logo, and taking part in a number of events across the valley, kicking off with Easter Kidapalooza, a free family event in Cathedral City. Join us Sunday, April 21 from noon to 3 p.m. at Town Square Park. Other fun and educational activities will take place throughout the week. Follow the District on Facebook @cvmosquito and Twitter @cv_mosquito to learn more.

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West Nile and St. Louis encephalitis are transmitted to people via the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite birds with the virus. Most people will have no symptoms; others develop fever, headaches, and body aches; hospitalization is required in some cases, and in rare cases the disease is fatal. Young children, the elderly, or individuals with lowered immune systems are at greater risk of experiencing severe symptoms when infected. Anyone with symptoms should contact their health care provider. The best way to prevent getting infected is to prevent mosquito bites.

Aedes aegypti is another mosquito species of concern in the Coachella Valley because it is capable of transmitting serious viruses including chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever, and Zika. While these viruses have not been transmitted locally by mosquitoes in California so far, local transmission can begin if an infected person returns to the Coachella Valley after traveling to an area where there is active transmission of these viruses. The invasive *Aedes* mosquito has been detected in eight of the nine valley cities and Mecca.

“Community commitment to remove standing water sources inside and outside of the home is critical to prevent disease-transmitting mosquitoes in the Coachella Valley,” District Public Information Manager Jill Oviatt said. “If people make mosquito prevention a weekly routine, just like taking out the trash, that’s when we will see real reductions in mosquitoes.”

Prevent mosquitoes around your home:

- Inspect yards for standing water sources and drain water that may have collected under potted plants, in bird baths, discarded tires, and any other items that could collect water.
- Check rain gutters and lawn drains to make sure they aren’t holding water and debris.
- Remove unnecessary items from your yard that can collect standing water.

Prevent mosquito bites:

- Avoid going outside in the hours around dawn and dusk when mosquitoes that can transmit West Nile and St. Louis encephalitis viruses are most active.
- Wear EPA registered ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and/or clothing (as directed on the product label).
- Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks, and shoes when mosquitoes are active.
- Maintain window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

Report stagnant water sources, mosquito problems, and dead birds to the District at (760) 342-8287 or online at www.cvmvcd.org/contact.htm. You can also learn more about mosquito and other vector threats in the Coachella Valley at www.cvmvcd.org.

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