



## *Fight The Bite*

# WEST NILE VIRUS

The Mississippi Department of Health urges all Mississippians to avoid mosquito bites whenever possible. The risk of a healthy person getting West Nile virus from a mosquito bite is very low, but protection remains important for all Mississippians.

West Nile virus is transmitted *primarily* through the bite of an infected mosquito. However, there have been isolated cases occurring in blood transfusion and organ donation recipients, from mother to baby during pregnancy, and through breast milk. People cannot become infected through ordinary contact with an infected bird, horse or human.

### ● Protect Yourself

- Avoid mosquitoes whenever possible. Stay indoors or take personal protective measures, especially between dusk and dawn, which are peak mosquito biting times.
- Use mosquito repellent with DEET. Products with up to 30 percent DEET will provide adequate protection under most conditions. Use DEET concentrations of 10 percent or less on children ages two years to 12 years of age, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For children less than two years of age, parents should consult their pediatrician. *Always follow the manufacturer's directions for use as printed on the product label.*
- Wear long-sleeved, long-legged clothing with socks and shoes when practical.
- Individuals should wear gloves when handling any dead bird or mammal because of the possibility of other diseases.

### ● Protect Your Home — Prevent Mosquito Breeding Around Your Home

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Remove all discarded tires on the property. Used tires have become the most common mosquito breeding site in the country.
- Remove all leaf debris.
- Close garbage can lids. Be sure water does not collect in the bottom of garbage cans.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in bird baths frequently (every 2-3 days).
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edge of ponds.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property.
- Repair damaged or torn window and door screens.
- Remove outdoor pet food and water dishes that are not being used.
- Flush livestock water troughs twice a week.
- Check around construction sites or do-it-yourself improvements to ensure that proper backfilling and grading prevent drainage problems.

## ● And Protect Your Community

- Call your local health department to report dead birds. Find county and **Health Info** numbers under Health Department in the BellSouth White Pages.
- To submit blue jays, crows, cardinals, house sparrows, and birds of prey (i.e., hawks, owls, etc.) avoid direct contact with and double-bag the bird. Keep the bird cool (under refrigeration) until you take it to the local health department. Do not submit decayed birds.
- If you know of specific mosquito control problems, call your local city or county public works director, the City Hall, or the Board of Supervisors.
- Learn what your local government is doing to control mosquitoes. Ask how you can help.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate mosquito breeding sites on their property.



**MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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