



San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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RISK OF WEST NILE INFECTION REMAINS HIGH FOR SAN GABRIEL VALLEY --Stay Protected this Labor Day Weekend--

West Covina, CA (August 28, 2008) – West Nile virus continues to circulate at high levels throughout Los Angeles and surrounding counties. As residents plan their activities for this last holiday of the summer season, we want to remind everyone to factor mosquito protection into their plans. “The only sure way to avoid West Nile virus infection is to avoid mosquito bites” said Kelly Middleton, Public Information Officer. Mosquitoes are most active in the hours following sunset and around dawn but may be active throughout the evening hours. Residents are strongly urged to use effective mosquito repellents if outdoors between these hours.

While many products claiming to repel mosquitoes are on the market, research has shown that those containing DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 provide the best protection from bites. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/repellentupdates.htm>. Other products have shown to have only minimal repellency action and should not be relied upon. Repellent infused wrist bands, lapel pins, or electronic devices do not provide adequate protection.

Wearing protective clothing – dense weave long sleeves and pants – can help deter bites but should not be relied upon for complete protection. Certain products containing Permethrin can be applied to clothing for added protection and repellents should be applied to still-exposed skin. Directions on all repellent products should be followed carefully to avoid adverse reactions.

“Labor Day may represent the end of summer, but it doesn’t mean it’s the end of mosquito season,” reminds Middleton, “West Nile virus risks will continue through the month of September and into October if it’s warm enough.” The District encourages residents to enjoy barbeques, pool parties, and other fun outdoor activities, but to do so wisely. Just as using sunscreens and seatbelts have become second nature, so should applying repellents before going outdoors.

Residents must also ensure that if doors and windows are left open, they should be covered by screens in good repair. Female mosquitoes entering homes are difficult to see and will bite unwitting victims throughout the night.

To date, 41 residents from Los Angeles County have been infected with WNV this year – 27 of which have had the more severe form of the illness (West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease). This represents the highest level of WNV activity of any year since the State's 2004 WNV epidemic.

We continue to find evidence of WNV in mosquitoes and birds in the San Gabriel Valley. The risk of becoming infected through the bite of an infected mosquito is very real and residents need to take these precautions seriously.

This Labor Day weekend, residents are encouraged to practice the District D's of Mosquito Prevention:

DRAIN standing water that may produce mosquitoes.

DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid being outdoors.

DRESS appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outside. DEFEND yourself by using an effective insect repellent. Make sure to follow label directions!

DOOR and window screens should be in good working condition.

DISTRICT personnel are also available to address any mosquito problems. Call us at 626-814-9466 or visit www.sgvmosquito.org

The District encourages the public to help identify WNV "hot spots" by reporting dead birds to the WNV Hotline at (877)WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Store this number in your cell phones to make reporting easier. While all birds might not be collected and tested, the reports are analyzed with sophisticated software by the California Department of Public Health to identify problem areas. This helps mosquito and vector control districts expedite control measures designed to reduce risks in these areas. We also urge our residents to call the District to report any mosquito activity.

Vacant homes with inoperable pools pose a very real risk to neighborhoods. One 'green' pool can breed thousands of mosquitoes per week that affect properties for blocks around. Residents are encouraged to report any such pools to the District at 626.814.9466 or www.sgvmosquito.org.

The District also provides the following pointers:

- Bleach will not kill mosquito larvae in water. Proper chlorination will *prevent algae from growing* which serves as a food source for mosquito larvae and attracts egg-aying female mosquitoes.
- Backyard ponds, water barrels, and fountains should be stocked with mosquitofish or treated with mosquito control products (Bti, Bs, or methoprene) available at home garden centers.
- When outdoors, do not rely on candles or other mosquito 'repellers' or 'zappers' since they have very limited or no effect.
- Broad-spectrum yard sprays will have little effect on adult mosquito populations around the home. Eliminating the source (standing water) is the best tactic.

The San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District is a non-profit public health agency dedicated to the control of mosquito and other vector-borne diseases. The District can be reached at 626-814-9466 or on the web at www.sgvmosquito.org.

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