



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

Cheryl Archbald, MD, MPH, Acting Commissioner, Department of Health
Ned McCormack, Communications Director
Contact: Caren Halbfinger (914) 813-5013 / after hours: 813-5000

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WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION EFFORTS FOR 2010 TO BEGIN IN WESTCHESTER

April showers bring May flowers, along with ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus. That's why the Westchester County Department of Health will now begin its annual West Nile Virus prevention efforts. The Health Department will apply larvicide to catch basins throughout the County starting **Monday, May 3** and is reminding residents to eliminate standing water from around their properties to keep mosquitoes away. Large areas of standing water that cannot easily be removed should be reported to the Health Department by calling (914) 813-5000.

"Through the combined efforts of residents and county government, we can successfully curb the mosquito population and keep cases of West Nile Virus to a minimum," said County Executive Robert P. Astorino. "All of us must do our part to keep mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus from breeding in Westchester."

"Discarded tires, unchlorinated swimming pools, outdoor pottery, sand pails and birdbaths are popular breeding sites for mosquitoes," said Dr. Cheryl Archbald, Acting Commissioner of Health. "That's why it is important that everyone survey their property routinely and empty standing water from these and other containers throughout the spring and summer."

Street catch basins, with their ability to contain stagnant water and organic debris, have been documented as ideal breeding environments for mosquitoes – particularly the types of mosquitoes that spread West Nile virus. That's why, starting Monday and through July, certified environmental health technicians from the Westchester County Department of Health will begin applying briquettes of a long term larvicide into state, county and local municipal catch basins to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult mosquitoes. Technicians will start with municipal storm water catch basins in the northern part of the county and work their way south until all county catch basins have been larvicided. Westchester County has been

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safely applying the same larvicide since 2001 to suppress the mosquito population.

Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile Virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days. As mosquitoes will breed in any untreated water, the Westchester County Department of Health recommends the following:

- Remove unneeded tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles from outdoor property.
- Cover trash containers to keep rain out.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Remove standing water from basements.
- Place a couple of capfuls of household bleach in a basement sump-pump pit if it has standing water.
- Keep drains, culverts and streams clean of weeds and trash so that water can drain properly.
- Make sure stored boat covers are completely drained and store small boats upside down.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Trim shrubs to eliminate hiding places for adult mosquitoes.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs. Be sure rainwater does not collect on their covers and disinfect them with bleach to kill mosquito larvae and eggs.
- Fill in hollow tree stumps and rot holes that hold water with sand or concrete.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.

For more information about larviciding and West Nile Virus, go to www.westchestergov.com/health or call the Health Department at (914) 813-5000.