



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS IS ACTIVE ALREADY IN NEIGHBORING COUNTIES Westchester residents urged to take precautions against West Nile virus

While no mosquito pools have yet tested positive for West Nile virus in Westchester, the virus has been active already in mosquitoes this year in neighboring counties. With that in mind, the Westchester County Department of Health is reminding residents to protect themselves and their homes from mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes have tested positive for the virus in Rockland County, and in Nassau, Suffolk and New York City. Nassau County also has reported one human case. Given Westchester County's proximity to these areas and the rainfall we have had lately, residents are advised to remove standing water to discourage breeding by mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus and to take personal protective measures such as using appropriate insect repellants.

The Westchester County Department of Health prepared for the summer mosquito season by applying larvicide briquettes to catch basins throughout the County in an effort to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases such as the West Nile virus. Residents should do their part, too, by taking personal protection measures and removing standing water where mosquitoes can breed.

To help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds where you live:

- Get rid of all water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover outdoor trash containers to keep rainwater from accumulating inside.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Sweep driveways after it rains so that they are free of puddles.

To reduce your risk of mosquito bites:

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellents with no more than 30% DEET, but use them sparingly and with care.

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- Select the lowest concentration effective for the amount of time spent outdoors.
- Products with concentrations around 10% are effective for periods of approximately two hours.
- A concentration of 24% has been shown to provide an average of five hours of protection. DEET should not be applied more than once a day.
- Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under 2 months of age. Carefully read and follow directions on the container and wash treated skin when mosquito exposure has ended.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens.
- Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

For more information on the department's larviciding and West Nile virus prevention activities, call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit www.westchestergov.com/health.