

Office of Neighborhood Services

City of Richland Hills, Texas

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor Bill Agan and members of the Richland Hills City Council
From: Scott Mitchell, Director of Neighborhood Services
Date: July 7, 2015
Subject: Mosquito Abatement Update

Council Action Requested:

Update on current Mosquito abatement plans and operations. No Council action required.

Background Information:

The unusually heavy rains that have occurred this year have successfully broken the drought conditions the area has been struggling with. But also with the wet weather comes a significant increase in the mosquito population.

The City of Richland Hills works closely with the Tarrant County Health Department to monitor, trap and test mosquitoes as part of the regional vector control program. This consists of both fixed traps and portable traps. Samples are submitted weekly for testing for potential carriers of West Nile Virus, West Nile Fever, Dengue Fever, Chikungunya Virus, Encephalitis and other vector borne diseases. So far we have had one mosquito test positive for West Nile in Richland Hills and a total of seven in Tarrant County. No human cases have been reported.

Public Works and the city landscape contractor have been aggressively mowing city property as practical when the ground dries out. Code Enforcement has concentrated on high grass and weed violations in an attempt to get compliance to prevent mosquito breeding.

The Environmental Manager has been aggressively treating stagnant pools of water with larvacide as well as hand spraying areas with high concentrations of mosquitoes. The area around the trap with the positive test was hand sprayed for a ¼ mile radius, with three treatments over a five day period as directed by Tarrant County Public Health. No more positive results have occurred at this time. Currently we do not have area wide spraying scheduled, but we do have a contingency plan in place if it is deemed necessary. Public notification will be made via multiple media outlets in the event the need for area spraying arises.

Members of the public are reminded that to help control mosquitoes, private yards need to be mowed, vegetation trimmed, and any standing water on their property should be emptied. If windows and doors are left open, screens should be in place and maintained in good condition.

For individual protection, the following is recommended:

- Use insect repellent with an EPA – registered active ingredient when outdoors
- Mosquitoes are most active from dusk to dawn. Wear long sleeves and long pants, along with repellent, if outdoors during the active periods
- Maintain door and window screens in good condition
- Remove mosquito breeding sites around the home by emptying items that hold water outdoors. Be sure and change pet water and birdbaths at least once a week. Even a small bit of stagnant water can allow mosquitoes to breed

Board/Citizen Input: N/A

Financial Impact: N/A

Staff Contacts:

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Attachments: Tarrant County Public Health flier

TAKE CONTROL

Stop West Nile Virus



In your yard • In your community

Dump standing water • Use repellent • Dress for dusk to dawn

PROTECT YOURSELF

WEST NILE VIRUS is now in most of the United States. Most people become infected through the bite of an infected mosquito. You can reduce your chance of getting infected by avoiding mosquito bites.

What Can I Do to Prevent WNV?

The easiest and best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites.

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient. Follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are the most active from dusk to dawn. Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks sprayed with repellent if you plan to be outdoors when mosquitoes are most active. Or consider staying indoors when the mosquitoes are biting.
- Make sure the screens on your windows and doors are in good shape. This helps keep mosquitoes from getting indoors.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flowerpots, buckets and other things that hold water. Change the water in pet dishes, and replace the water in birdbaths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.



What Is the Risk of Getting Sick from WNV?

People over 50 at higher risk to get severe illness. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious symptoms of WNV if they do get sick and should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

Being outside means you're at risk. The more time you're outdoors, the more time you could be bitten by an infected mosquito. Pay attention to avoiding mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or playing.

Risk through medical procedures is very low. Donated blood is checked for WNV before being used. The risk of getting WNV through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small, and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor.

Pregnancy and nursing do not increase the risk of becoming infected with WNV. The risk that WNV may present to a fetus or an infant infected through breastmilk is still being evaluated. Talk with your doctor if you have concerns.

What happens if I get infected?

Most people who get infected with West Nile virus do not have any symptoms. Some people develop a mild illness called **West Nile Fever**. This mild illness gets better on its own. No treatment is needed. A small number of people (about 1 in 150) who get infected with West Nile virus develop severe disease, called **West Nile encephalitis** or **West Nile meningitis** (inflammation of the brain or the area around the brain). This severe disease usually requires hospitalization. In some cases, especially among older people, it can result in death. Symptoms of severe illness include headache, high fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, tremors (shaking), convulsions, coma, and paralysis. See your doctor if you develop these symptoms. There is no specific treatment for the West Nile virus infection.

NOTE: There is no vaccine available for people.

