

MOSQUITOES AND WEST NILE VIRUS

For the past few summers you may have heard about health departments testing dead birds for the West Nile Virus. While most birds do not carry the virus, mosquitoes can become infected with the virus by biting an infected bird that is a carrier. Hawks, crows and blue jays belong to the family of birds that are particularly vulnerable to the West Nile Virus.

West Nile Virus was first detected in the United States in 1999 and is transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. Symptoms range from mild (fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen glands) to the more severe symptoms (coma, convulsion, muscle weakness, paralysis, meningitis and Encephalitis) that require hospitalization.

VECTORS VS. NUISANCE

Two types of mosquitoes dominate Plano, the *Culex quinquefasciatus* (the Common House Mosquito) and the *Aedes albopictus* (the Asian Tiger Mosquito).



The House Mosquito is a known vector of Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. They are normally active from June until October. These mosquitoes are very timid and females normally feed between dusk and dawn. Flight range is one to two miles.



The Asian Tiger Mosquito is not a known vector to humans of Encephalitis or West Nile Virus. Along the border of Texas and Mexico, they have been a vector of Dengue fever. In Plano, they are considered a nuisance. They are active when the temperatures are continually above 50° F. They are aggressive biters and are most active after sunrise and before sunset. These mosquitoes are not good fliers, they usually stay within three feet of the ground and their flight range is a block to less than a half mile. They are most noted for attacking ankles and leaving whelps.

MOSQUITO BORNE ENCEPHALITIS

Mosquito transmitted Encephalitis is serious. Although the odds of contracting it are low it is one of the most significant mosquito carried diseases in the United States. People can contract the disease after just one bite from an infected mosquito. Symptoms appear 5 -15 days after being bitten.

EARLY SYMPTOMS

Severe headaches
Nausea
Vomiting
Fever
Chills
Muscle aches
Stiff neck

LATER SYMPTOMS

Mental confusion
Sleepiness
Seizures
Permanent brain injury
Paralysis

CONTROLLING MOSQUITOES

In order to control mosquito breeding sites all citizens must be willing to be a part of the process. We encourage all citizens to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Get rid of all standing water
2. Empty, remove, cover or turn upside down any container that will hold standing water (bottles, tires, cans, flower pots, buckets, trash cans, etc.)
3. Change water in pet dishes, wading pools and bird baths several times a week
4. Repair leaking plumbing, hoses and outside faucets
5. Clean roof gutters and downspouts regularly
6. Eliminate standing water on tarps and flat roofs
7. Drain water from boats and other water craft

BITE PREVENTION

1. Keep doors, porches and window screens in good condition to help keep mosquitoes out of the house
2. Avoid mosquito bites while outside by wearing long sleeves, loose, light colored clothing and pants
3. Stay indoors after dusk

REPELLENT USE

1. Use insect repellent product with 20-30 percent DEET for adults
2. Less than 10 percent DEET for children
Adults should apply repellent on children
3. Spray repellent on hands and apply to face
4. Only apply repellent to exposed skin and clothing
Do not use under clothing
5. Do not apply repellent to cuts, wounds, sunburn or irritated skin
6. Wash repellent off daily and re-apply as needed

DEAD BIRDS

For instructions on the disposal of dead birds, such as blue jays and hawks, call the Health Department Hotline 972-941-7180 or Animal Services at 972-769-4360. Information on mosquito spraying activity can be found on the website at www.plano.gov or calling our HOTLINE at 972-941-7180. To report the location of a dead bird call 972-941-7143.