

# Press Release

## Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District



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### **Current Focus on Public Health Reinforces the Need for Residents to Protect Themselves from Mosquito-Borne Diseases**

Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week educates California residents about preventing mosquito-borne viruses

LANCASTER, APRIL 17, 2020 -- With the focus around the Covid-19 Pandemic, the increased attention on public health is an excellent reminder that public health is an integral part of the health and safety of our communities. There are many facets of public health and mosquito control is one of them. Mosquito experts throughout the state want to remind the public that there are ways for residents to protect themselves from the viruses transmitted by infected mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes don't transmit Covid-19, but they can transmit several other diseases. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that has impacted the lives of California residents since 2003. West Nile virus remains the largest mosquito-related public health threat in the state. "There is no human vaccine for West Nile virus which can cause debilitating cases of meningitis, encephalitis, and even death" states District Manager Cei Kratz. "As we enter mosquito season, the District urges all residents to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito-transmitted diseases". By raising awareness and encouraging individual action, we can protect health and save lives.

To raise awareness and educate Californians about the public health threat mosquitoes pose to our communities, Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week is observed April 19-25, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that we must protect ourselves from all public health threats including mosquito-transmitted diseases. Mosquito control is essential and it's critical that residents understand that we all play an important part in helping to eliminate mosquitoes from our communities.

After a rainy spring, there are many areas of stagnant water, which can create mosquito breeding sites. Mosquitoes can lay their eggs in sources of water as small as a bottle cap and can complete their life cycle, from egg to adult, in about a week. "With many Californians at home right now under stay-at-home orders, it's a good time to check around properties and yards for mosquito sources," said Peter Bonkrude, president of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC). "Children who are home from school can help check yards and learn about the importance of dumping and draining all standing water. Checking flowerpots, buckets, and other backyard sources is an easy and very important activity."

Climate change has facilitated the spread of two invasive mosquito species: *Aedes albopictus* and *Aedes aegypti*. They are now present throughout the state in 16 counties. Invasive *Aedes* exploit small and cryptic water sources (think plant saucers, children's toys, trash, etc...) and are vectors of Zika, dengue fever, chikungunya, yellow fever, and dog heartworm. There are no human vaccines for dengue fever and Zika viruses, both of which are costly to treat and can have long-term health and financial consequences.

**To minimize exposure to mosquito bites:**

- Apply insect repellent containing EPA-registered active ingredients, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535, according to label instructions, prior to going outdoors.
- Dress in loose-fitting long sleeves and pants when mosquitoes are present.
- Install screens on windows and doors and keep them in good repair to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including water found in flowerpots, old tires, buckets, pet dishes, and trash cans.
- Repair leaking faucets and broken sprinklers to prevent creating sources of standing water.
- Clean rain gutters clogged with leaves.

For additional information on mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases please visit the California Department of Public Health at:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/MosquitoesandMosquitoBorneDiseases.aspx>

Report mosquito nuisances or green pools to (661) 942-2917 or [Leann@avmosquito.org](mailto:Leann@avmosquito.org)

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