



City and County of San Francisco

Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH  
Health Officer

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Eileen Shields, Public Information Officer**  
**415/554-2507 (o) 415/370-3377 (cell)**  
[Eileen.Shields@sfdph.org](mailto:Eileen.Shields@sfdph.org)

### **Preventing West Nile Virus**

**San Francisco, CA** – Just as summer begins to slip away throughout California, San Francisco begins to warm up with what many residents maintain is the best weather of the year. The warm days also promote the breeding of mosquitoes that can carry West Nile virus. WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

The Department of Public Health is reminding San Franciscans to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying insect repellent and eliminating all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding.

To date, California has 20 confirmed cases of West Nile Virus illness in humans (no deaths.) In animals, we have 228 dead birds and one horse case. Fortunately, no WNV human cases have been reported in San Francisco residents. Prevention is key.

The Department of Public Health responds to mosquito complaints and works to abate breeding grounds quickly, but due to the nature of mosquitoes and the challenge of accessibility to some areas of infestation, abatement efforts may not eradicate them completely. But there are a number of steps that property owners, managers, residents and anyone who sees mosquitoes in their neighborhood can take to decrease the chance for mosquitoes to breed and spread West Nile Virus.

- Understand that mosquitoes need water to breed. Mosquito larva could be found wiggling in stagnant pools of water. Visit the web for videos on identifying larva.
- Check outdoors in areas such as: pools of water, bird baths, disconnected fountains, ponds, potted plant saucers, long standing puddles, water accumulation in fallen leaves
- Check indoor pools of water in areas such as: obstructed floor drains in the basement, abandoned fish tanks, watering cans. Do not store open containers of water for later use.
- Eliminate the source by eliminating the water. Turn water containers over and let water percolate through soil. Do NOT pour infested water into a drain or catch basin.
- Remove accumulation of leaves and overgrowth of vegetation.

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**The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.**

We shall ~ Assess and research the health of the community ~ Develop and enforce health policy ~ Prevent disease and injury ~  
~ Educate the public and train health care providers ~ Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services ~ Ensure equal access to all ~

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- If mosquito larvae are found in water sources that cannot be drained, consult with a certified pest control operator or call the Department of Public Health at (415) 252-3887 for safe, non-chemical alternatives.
- Keep screens on windows.
- Call 1(877) WNV-BIRD or 1(877)968-2473 to report dead birds that may have been infected with mosquito-borne diseases.

Mosquitoes may also breed above or below ground in areas such as in water accumulation on roofs, rain gutters, knotholes in trees, outdoor floor drains, catch basins or utility vaults. To report complaints of mosquito infestation, call (415) 252-3805.

For more information go to <http://westnile.ca.gov/>.

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