



Our Insect Enemies



Protect Yourself Against West Nile Virus

(NAPSA)—When West Nile virus first turned up in the United States in 1999, striking 62 people and killing seven in Queens, N.Y., the hope was that the disease would not survive its first winter in this country. By spring, that hope vanished. At the end of 2001, the virus had spread to 27 states, and by the close of 2002, human cases of West Nile were confirmed in 41 states, securing its status as a nationwide public health issue.

A blood-borne illness, West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquitoes to a variety of hosts, including birds, horses, cats, dogs, bats, rabbits and humans. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that more than 4,100 human cases have been confirmed. Of these victims, 277 have died from the illness. People 50 and older are most susceptible to becoming ill from the virus.

Most cases of West Nile in humans show up in late summer or early fall, but can appear year-round in warmer parts of the country. Not surprisingly, late summer also is peak season for mosquitoes, says Orkin Pest Control.

“Mosquito season can start as early as April in some regions, but August and September are prime mosquito months in most areas,” says Orkin entomologist Frank Meek. “Fortunately, a few easy control measures in the late spring or early summer can drastically cut down on the number of mosquitoes in your yard by August.”

The following are some simple ways to keep mosquitoes at bay and protect yourself and your family:

- Eliminate breeding sites. Check for and eliminate any standing water around the home at least once a week. Mosquitoes



In warm weather months, it's important to take precautions to protect against West Nile virus.

can breed in as little as a thimbleful of water. Common locations include clogged roof gutters, bird-baths, pet bowls, wading pools, plant pots, swimming pool covers and toys.

- Replace outdoor light bulbs with yellow bulbs or sodium vapor bulbs that are less attractive to mosquitoes.

- Install or repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors.

- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when outside.

- Apply insect repellent. Ideally, use a repellent that contains a high percentage of DEET. The higher the percentage, the longer it will repel mosquitoes.

- If possible, avoid being outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

To find out more about how to control the mosquito population in and around your home, visit www.orkin.com. For more information about the West Nile virus, ask your doctor or visit www.cdc.gov.