



Flying K

**School's starting --
watch out
for little ones
in school zones.
Drive carefully!**

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South Texas clinics 'fight the bite' to help prevent mosquito-borne illnesses

By Bill Love
NHCCC Public Affairs

Public Health Services (PHS) at Naval Health Clinic Corpus Christi (NHCCC) Aug. 7, described on-base monitoring of West Nile virus (WNV) and recommendations for reducing mosquito bites.

"Our 'Fight the Bite' approach to the prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses begins with a vigilant surveillance program conducted by our staff in Preventive Medicine (PREVMED). This basic surveillance consists of trapping mosquitoes around the base in order to identify the number, species, and gender of the local mosquito population," said Dr. M. Rony Francois, NHCCC director, PHS and public health emergency officer.

Although the Texas Department of State Health Services reports a higher than usual number of human West Nile virus cases in Texas this year due to the warm winter and recent rains, PREVMED is proactively performing year-round inspections on-base.

"Mosquito surveillance serves as a sentinel for human disease, because if you are finding West Nile virus in the mosquito population during trapping, guess what, it's just a matter of time before it shows up in humans," added Francois.

PREVMED maintains traps located throughout family housing and at the nearby Childhood Development Center, and one of its representatives described the process.

"We've had a lot of complaints about mosquitoes this summer because they like the humidity and the heat," said HM3 (FMF) Taylor Boynton, while he mixed a batch of stagnant pond water with grass and dried rabbit food.



HM3 Taylor Boynton, a preventive medicine representative at the NAS Corpus Christi Naval Health Clinic, collects pond water for mosquito traps located in the pond near base family housing on station. Clinic preventive medicine staff members monitor the on-base mosquito population year-round, focusing on the summer months when the insects are more abundant and there is an increased chance of acquiring mosquito-borne illnesses. The Texas Department of State Health Services reports a higher than usual number of human West Nile virus cases in Texas this year due to the warm winter and recent rains. (Photo by Bill W. Love, Navy Health Clinic Corpus Christi)

After pouring the mixture into rubberized tubs outfitted with fan-powered traps, mosquitoes attracted to their new environment are captured when they are sucked up into the net covering.

When summer began in June, on-base residents had to contend with swarms of mosquitoes.

"I think our high point was 76 mosquitoes in one trap about a month ago," said Boynton. "When we find 20 mosquitoes in a trap that is extremely high."

NAS Kingsville Branch Health Clinic's preventive medicine personnel also conduct testing on board the air station.

"We currently have three mosquito traps that we set up in various locations around the air station," said HM1(SW) Jordan Saffell-Randolph. "One goes to the horse stables and the other two rotate to different locations around base like the gym, softball field, barracks are common areas."

Saffell-Randolph added that Clinic corpsmen set the traps twice a week, allowing ample time to send out the specimens and receive the results on a timely basis.

"So far," Saffell-Randolph explained, "since we haven't received any major rain lately we haven't been catching more than a handful of female mosquito's (the ones that

bite) – but we've caught a lot of male mosquitoes."

At NAS Corpus Christi, once the insects are trapped and collected, Boynton says that a brief stint in the freezer immobilizes them for further study under the microscope. The team then sorts out all of the males and gathers the females for supplementary analysis by the veterinarian.

"Our team works closely with Army Capt. Crystal Lindaberry, officer in charge, NAS Corpus Christi Veterinary Services. She facilitates the provision of additional testing on appropriate specimens in San Antonio," said Francois.

"The other important aspect of our preventive strategy is to educate every family about useful precautions that help to reduce the risk of mosquito bites," he added.

Best advice? When you're outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, and be sure to follow the directions on the package.

Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and

dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.

Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly.

Drill holes in tire swings so water drains

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What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness. Experts believe WNV is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall.

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. Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants or consider staying indoors during these hours.

Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out. Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels.

Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths 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 are the symptoms of WNV?

About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

How Does West Nile Virus Spread?

Most often, WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite.

In a very small number of cases, WNV also has been spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breastfeeding and even during pregnancy from mother to baby.

WNV is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus.

How is WNV infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In cases with milder symptoms, people experience symptoms such as fever and aches that pass on their own, although even healthy people have become sick for several weeks. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital where they can receive supportive treatment including intravenous fluids, help with breathing and nursing care.

West Nile Virus detected in South Texas, experts offer preventive tips

By Elaine Sanchez

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

The West Nile Virus has been detected in South Texas; however, a few simple preventive measures can help to abate the issue, post officials said.

"Three sample pools of mosquitoes collected July 18 tested positive for West Nile Virus by Public Health Command South," said Capt. Lyndsay Knoblock-Fast, Brooke Army Medical Center preventive medicine entomologist. "One human case and no confirmed animal cases on Fort Sam Houston."

Larviciding, which is mosquito population control, will be performed in specific locations as deemed necessary, officials said. If needed, notification of fogging dates and times to tenant commands and housing residents will be made public. Meanwhile, the local medical community has been advised to be vigilant for WNV infection.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, milder WNV illness improves on its own, and people do not necessarily need to seek medical attention for this infection, though they may choose to do so.

People who develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, should seek medical attention immediately. Severe WNV illness usually requires hospitalization.

Pregnant women and nursing mothers are encouraged to talk to their doctor if they develop symptoms that could be WNV.

According to experts, 80 percent of patients bitten by WNV-infected mosquitoes will have no symptoms; 20 percent may develop flu-like symptoms such as headache, nausea, vomiting and occasional rash on the chest and back; and 1 percent may develop more severe symptoms of meningitis, encephalitis or paralysis.

People typically develop symptoms between three and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

However, experts added, only specific mosquito species can transmit WNV so most mosquito bites don't warrant medical evaluation. The chances any person will become severely ill from any one mosquito bite are extremely small.

According to the Texas Public Health Information Network, a higher than usual number of human West Nile Virus cases has been reported this year due to the warm winter and recent rains.

JBSA-Fort Sam Houston residents and building managers can take a few simple precautionary measures to ensure everyone's safety, according to Frank Martinez, team leader of the 502nd Civil Engineer Squadron's pest control unit.

"Many mosquito problems can be reduced by eliminating breeding sites or standing water and emptying containers that hold water," Martinez said. "That is the single most effective measure people can take to eliminate the places where mosquitoes breed."

Other measures include:

- Not allowing puddles to form on your lawn as a result of excessive watering
- Placing tiny holes in the bottom of recycling bins without lids
- Replacing water in birdbaths
- Getting rid of old tires
- Preventing bottles, tin cans, buckets or drums from collecting water
- Wearing a long sleeve shirt or pants if going outdoors at dawn, dusk or the early evening; and

• Use EPA-registered insect repellent on your skin and clothing according to the directions on the product label.

For questions or concerns, call BAMC Preventive Medicine Services at 295-2328 or 2742. For information regarding pets, including horses, contact JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Veterinary Services at 808-6101 or 6104.

For more information on the virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>.

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out. And keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they are not in use.

"Currently, the mainstay of treatment for West Nile virus infection is supportive.

Therefore, the preventive activities remain the essential elements of our strategy for reducing morbidity and mortality from this disease," said Francois.



Many mosquito problems can be reduced by eliminating breeding sites or standing water and emptying containers that hold water. (Photo courtesy of Onondaga County Texas Health Department.)

How soon do infected people get sick?

People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

What is the risk of getting sick?

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. All 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.

What is the CDC doing about WNV?

CDC is working with state and local health departments and other government agencies, as well as private industry, to prepare for and prevent new cases of WNV.

Some things CDC is doing include:

*Manage and maintain ArboNET, a nation-wide electronic surveillance system where states share information about WNV and other arboviral diseases

*Support states develop and carry out improved mosquito prevention and control programs

*Developing better, faster tests to detect and diagnose WNV

*Prepare updated prevention and surveillance information for the media, the public, and health professionals

*Working with partners on the development of vaccines

What else should I know?

If you find a dead bird: Don't handle it with your bare hands. Contact your local health department for instructions on reporting and disposing of the body.

For more information call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), or (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY). (Courtesy Centers for Disease Control)