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Reducing Mosquito Habitat Key to Avoiding West Nile Virus

As of today, there has been one mosquito found carrying West Nile Virus (WNV) in Oklahoma County. Therefore, OKC-County Health Department (OCCHD) is advising residents to take proactive measures against the mosquito-borne illness by avoiding mosquito bites and reducing habitats where mosquitoes live and breed. "One of the best steps people can take is looking around their homes to identify and get rid of any sources of standing, stagnant water where mosquito larvae can grow," says OCCHD Public Health Protection Chief Phil Maytubby.

Steps To Take Now To Reduce Mosquito Habitats: Prevent items such as buckets, cans, pool covers, flower pots, and tires from holding standing water. Empty and refill birdbaths and your pet's outdoor water bowl daily.

Swimming pools and fishponds with circulating water generally are not a problem. "As long as the water is moving the larvae cannot grow," Maytubby says.

For standing water sources that cannot be drained, OCCHD recommends microbial larvicides that kill mosquito larvae before they become adults. Use of larvicides can reduce or eliminate the need for ground or aerial application of pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes.

Microbial larvicides are **non-toxic** to humans and may be purchased from hardware or home improvement stores.

Keep window and door screens in good repair. Also, Maytubby says remember the **FOUR Ds**:

1. **Dusk to dawn** – Mosquitoes that carry WNV are most active during these hours, so if you must go outside always take precautions.
2. **Dress** – Wear long sleeves with cuffs and long pants wherever mosquitoes are likely to be biting.
3. **DEET** – Use an insect repellent containing DEET on any exposed skin.

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4. **Drainage** – Check regularly around your home for any water accumulation that could provide mosquito breeding grounds. For pools, hot tubs or water features, OCCHD recommends that residents “cover, drain or maintain” these water sources to eliminate mosquito habitats.

Residents of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County may also report sources of stagnant water outside their own property. To file a complaint about mosquito habitats, visit our website at <http://www.occhd.org/community/foodprotection/complaintform>.

For more information on larvicides:

<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/health/mosquitoes/larvicides4mosquitoes.htm>

For additional information on WNV visit our website at www.occhd.org

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