



Maricopa County

News Release

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Environmental Services
Department

*"Working with our
community to ensure a safe
and healthy environment"*

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Mosquitoes are looking for you!

Maricopa County confirms the year's first positive mosquito sample and early start of 2013 West Nile virus season

PHOENIX - Maricopa County Environmental Services department (MCESD) reported mosquito traps returning with an increased number of mosquitoes last week, while one sample tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). This confirms the early start of this year's West Nile virus season. Residents are reminded about the importance to "Fight the Bite".

As temperatures start to heat-up, so does the mosquito population. Maricopa County just experienced a wet winter, and the past months were not extremely cold. As nighttime temperatures get warmer, we will start noticing increased mosquito activity.

"It is important to remember that the more we prevent mosquitoes from breeding, the more we can control the West Nile virus," said John Kolman, Environmental Services Department director. "This is why it is very important that along with the County mosquito abatement program, we all do our part, eliminating any mosquito breeding sites in our yards and also working with our neighbors and community," said Kolman.

Take these precautions to eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home and prevent WNV:

- Remove standing water in potted plants, tires, bird baths and other containers where water may collect
- Remove unnecessary clutter
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home
- Make sure pools and decorative ponds are properly maintained and operational

Additionally, when outdoors, heed the following safety tips:

- Wear light colored clothing with long sleeves and pants
- If possible, avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active and avoid being bitten by mosquitoes at any time
- Use protective clothing when exposure to mosquitoes cannot be avoided
- Properly apply Insect Repellent –following label instructions – and share your insect repellent with those around you. *(CDC recommends repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or PMD, or IR3535).*

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MCESD conducts year-round surveillance of mosquitoes: collecting samples and running tests on these samples collected from many locations throughout the Valley.

“Fogging operations are conducted when three criteria are met: more than 30 Culex mosquitoes are found in a trap; there are more than 300 floodwater mosquitoes swarming; and any of the samples collected test positive for West Nile virus”, explained John Townsend, Vector Control Division Manager with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department.

WNV is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Approximately 20 percent of people infected with WNV will feel flu-like symptoms (*e.g., fever, headache, rash*). A small number of those infected with WNV will experience severe symptoms such as meningitis, paralysis or even death. Older people and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk for severe illness. If you think you are experiencing WNV symptoms, please consult your health care provider.

Last year, Maricopa County reported 168 positive mosquito samples and 88 lab confirmed human cases with 3 deaths. In 2004 when the county led the number of cases across all counties in the nation, WNV infected 355 people in Maricopa County and 14 people died from the disease.

For more information on West Nile virus, to set-up an appointment to obtain mosquito eating fish at no cost to you, to report green pools, file any mosquito related complaint, register on the Fogging Notification System or for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, please call the West Nile Virus General Information and Help Line at (602) 506-0700, or visit <http://www.maricopa.gov/wnv>.

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For more than 50 years, Maricopa County Environmental Services department has been working with our community to ensure a safe and healthy environment. The department serves the nation’s fourth largest county with a population of nearly 4 million people. Using innovative methods, our Environmental Health professionals take proactive steps to regulate the food safety in eating and drinking establishments, work with stakeholders to keep our water supply free from contamination, and provide surveillance/enforcement activities to help minimize vector borne health risks.

***To find out more, visit esd.maricopa.gov or call (602) 506-6616. Follow us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/MCEnviro>
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