



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mosquitoes are Still a Threat**

*DCH Encourages Georgians to Practice Safety Measures While Outdoors*

**ATLANTA** – As temperatures begin to slowly decrease and the summer comes to a close, it is important to wear insect repellent while enjoying the great outdoors. The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is continuing to stress the importance of practicing safety measures while outdoors to minimize exposure to mosquitoes that carry the West Nile Virus (WNV).

“Insect repellent helps reduce your exposure to mosquito bites that may carry West Nile Virus or other diseases, and allows you to continue to play, work, and enjoy the outdoors with a lower risk of disease,” said Rosmarie Kelly, Entomologist with DCH’s Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Team. “Mosquitoes that carry the West Nile Virus are more likely to bite during the evening, night and early morning.”

DCH recommends that Georgians take the following precautions to protect themselves and their families during these periods:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk
- Consider using insect repellent containing DEET. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label

Symptoms of WNV include headache, fever, neck discomfort, muscle and joint aches, swollen lymph nodes and a rash. People with compromised immune systems or other underlying conditions are at greater risk for complications from the disease. In rare cases, West Nile Virus can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and lining of the brain).

Mosquitoes need water to breed. By removing areas of standing water you will eliminate breeding grounds and reduce the number of mosquitoes. The following precautionary measures are recommended to reduce exposure to mosquitoes and risk of WNV:

- Dispose of old tires. Regularly empty any metal cans, ceramic flowerpots, bottles, jars, buckets, and other water-holding containers on your property
- Turn over plastic wading pools, outdoor toys and wheelbarrows when not in use
- Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated. Remove standing water from pool covers
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets
- Keep gutters cleared and sloped to the downspout
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors

- Make sure windows and screens are in good condition. Repair any holes in screens
- Purchase and use Mosquito Dunks or Mosquito Torpedoes (larvicides used to kill mosquito larvae) to control mosquitoes in areas with standing water and in containers that cannot be dumped

For more information on WNV and prevention methods Georgia, log onto [www.health.state.ga.us](http://www.health.state.ga.us)

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