Georgia Department of Public Health

Peachtree Street NW, 15th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
www.health.state.ga.us

West Nile Virus (WNV) in Georgia

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Why doesn't my county spray?

- Many counties that do have spraying programs in place have been spraying for years, long before WNV was present in Georgia. This spraying is done to protect against nuisance mosquitoes, NOT WNV specifically.
- A list of Georgia counties with mosquito control programs can be found at http://www.gamosquito.org/resources/GAMosquitoControlListv2009.pdf.
- Adulticiding is just one of the tools used for WNV prevention. Public education on personal protection, along with source reduction and larviciding, should also be part of the program for the prevention of WNV. See Mosquito Control BMPs (http://www.gamosquito.org/resources/Special%20Projects/AMCA_BMPsforMosquitoManagement.pdf) for additional information.
- Most counties in Georgia do not have the resources to provide effective mosquito control. Mosquito control programs require sustainable funding.
- There is evidence that well-integrated mosquito control programs, including surveillance, source reduction (eliminating mosquito breeding areas), larviciding (placing specific chemicals in places where mosquitoes lay eggs) and adulticiding, can reduce mosquito numbers, which will help with disease control.
- While mosquito control decisions, including whether or not to spray, are made at the local level, state public health officials in Georgia support an integrated approach for mosquito control. Local officials can contact the Department of Public Health for more information about how to conduct an integrated program in their counties.

What can I do to protect myself?

- Most mosquitoes that carry WNV don't travel more than ½ mile from their breeding place. The best way to protect your family against WNV is to remove standing water from around your home, and the best time to start is now.
- Persons can protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing light-weight long-sleeved shirts and long pants, weather permitting, when mosquitoes are biting, and by using mosquito repellant containing N,N-DIETHYL-META- TOLUAMIDE (DEET)

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or other repellents recommended by the CDC (http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/prevention/index.html).

- The AAP suggests that DEET-based repellents be used to protect against insect- and tick-borne disease and advises parents that products containing up to 30% DEET can be used on children over the age of two months. However, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and parents of children under the age of 2 years should contact their health care provider before using these products.
- Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product.
- Permanone can be used ON CLOTHING to repel mosquitoes. These products should never be applied to the skin. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product.

What's the point of testing birds?

- Dead bird surveillance has been a sensitive indicator of local transmission of WNV in Georgia and in other states and can play a role in predicting human risk of infection. In some counties this may be the only indicator.
- Mosquito surveillance and testing can be done in response to the finding of positive dead birds in order to aid in localizing the site of disease transmission and determine areas needing mosquito control.

Why do mosquito surveillance?

- Mosquito surveillance helps public health officials know if human risk of disease is rising and when and where to apply mosquito control measures. Without surveillance, chemicals may be sprayed where mosquitoes are *not* a problem and places where mosquitoes *are* a problem can be missed.
- Surveillance enables the public (through local source reduction) and public health officials (through integrated mosquito control) to reduce mosquito breeding before mosquitoes become a public health problem.

Where can I go to learn more about this?

Check out the Georgia Mosquito Control association website at http://www.GAmosquito.org.

Also, check the CDC's WNV page at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm