



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**First West Nile Virus Illness of 2017 Confirmed in California
*Practical Mosquito Control Measures Can Limit Spread of Disease***

San Luis Obispo — Following the recent confirmation of West Nile virus illness in nearby Kings County, the first such case this year in California, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department is reminding residents to limit the spread of mosquito-borne disease by protecting themselves from mosquito bites and helping eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

"When we take steps to prevent mosquito breeding and bites, we're stopping the spread of disease," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer of the County of San Luis Obispo. "While West Nile virus has become a part of life here in California, it's important to remember that we can take action to keep ourselves and our families safe. Simple, low-tech steps like draining sources of standing water go a long way when it comes to protecting our community from mosquito-borne illnesses."

Community members can play an important role in limiting the spread of West Nile by preventing mosquito bites and helping eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

To prevent mosquito bites, focus on protecting yourself and your home:

- **Apply a repellent** that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. (Follow label directions for safety.)
- **Wear protective clothing** such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- **Check and repair all screens**, including screen doors, to keep mosquitoes out.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home, focus on eliminating standing water:

- **Find and drain containers that collect water around the yard**, such as empty cans, buckets, flowerpots, old tires, trash cans, swimming pool covers and more.
- **Clear roof gutters** so water can drain properly.
- **Clean and scrub bird baths, fountains, pet dishes, and other water sources** at least once a week.

West Nile virus is commonly transmitted to humans and animals by mosquitoes. While most people infected with West Nile do not experience any symptoms, about one in five experience flu-like symptoms and a small number of people (less than one percent) develop serious neurologic illness. The risk of serious illness is higher for people over 50 years of age and people with certain medical conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

County of San Luis Obispo Health Agency

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In 2016, 442 cases of people becoming ill from West Nile virus were reported to the California Department of Public Health. The last reported case of human West Nile virus in San Luis Obispo County was confirmed in 2016. West Nile virus activity typically follows a seasonal pattern based on mosquito populations.

More information on West Nile virus activity in California is available at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Mosquito prevention tips and resources for San Luis Obispo County—including special recommendations for golf courses, wineries, and other agricultural properties—are available at bit.ly/slo-mosquito. The attached document includes an overview of mosquito prevention recommendations from the County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Services.

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Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are more than just a nuisance. They can transmit a variety of diseases and parasites to humans and animals.



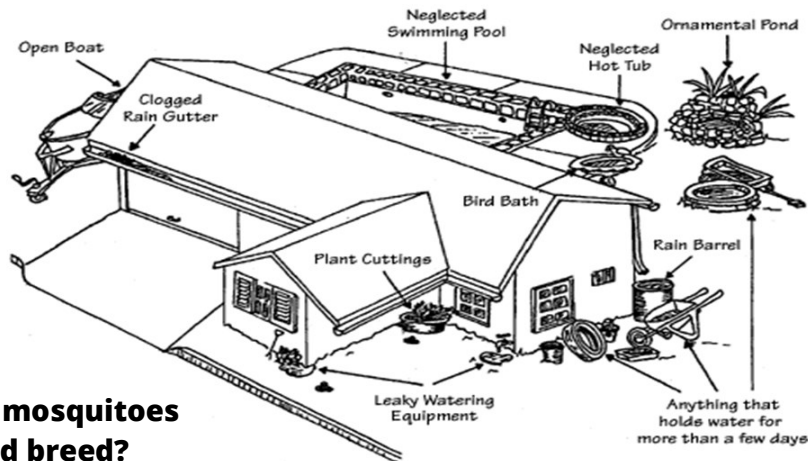
Personal protection against mosquito bites is important, particularly for the elderly and small children.



You can avoid being bitten by mosquitoes by:

- *Applying a repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (follow label directions).*
- *Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.*
- *Check and repair all screens and screen doors to keep mosquitoes out of your house.*
- *Minimize outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.*

COMMON MOSQUITO BREEDING SOURCES AROUND THE HOME



Where do mosquitoes live and breed?

- Mosquitoes rest in tall grass, weeds, and brush near inhabited locations such as homes and other buildings.
- Mosquitoes breed in stagnant, standing fresh water oftentimes found around the home.
- In tin cans, buckets, discarded tires and other artificial containers that hold stagnant water.
- In untended pools, birdbaths, clogged rain gutters, and plastic wading pools that hold stagnant water.
- In storm drains and catch basins in urban areas.
- In septic seepage and other foul water sources above or below ground level.
- In agricultural irrigation.
- Whenever water stands for four to seven days, mosquitoes can multiply. Eliminating even small amounts of standing water eliminates mosquitoes.

What can I do to reduce mosquito breeding around my home?

- Dispose of empty cans, buckets, flowerpots, old tires, trash cans, etc.
- Clear clogged roof gutters.
- Change water in bird baths and fountains at least once a week.
- Flush sump pump pits weekly.
- Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.
- Drain swimming pool covers.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Use landscaping to eliminate stagnant water that collects on your property.
- Clip tall grass or weeds standing near the house or where people use the yard. Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds.



For more information,
San Luis Obispo County
Environmental Health Services
visit our website at
www.slopublichealth.org/eh.