



Maricopa County

News Release

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Fireworks, Barbecues and West Nile virus Safety Tips Maricopa County reminds you to Celebrate A Mosquito Free Holiday!

PHOENIX - When planning your activities for this 4th of July, be sure to include and follow our safety tips to keep you and your family safe from West Nile virus (WNV). Maricopa County Environmental Services department reminds residents of the importance to "Fight the Bite".

"Inform your family and be prepared when participating in outdoor activities such as grilling, swimming, or enjoying fireworks," said Max Wilson, chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

Wherever you may be this 4th of July, it is recommended that you bring your insect repellent along and remember to please follow label instructions, especially for use on children. Share your insect repellent with those around you. (CDC recommends repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or PMD, or IR3535).

Additionally, 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 and insect repellent when exposure to mosquitoes cannot be avoided.

WNV is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Approximately 20 percent of people infected with West Nile virus will feel flu-like symptoms occurring three to 15 days after the mosquito bite. Symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, and skin rash.

A small percentage of people who are infected with WNV will experience severe symptoms such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis or even death. Persons over the age of 50 are generally at a higher risk for severe symptoms. If you think you are experiencing WNV symptoms, please consult your health care provider.

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Last week, the Maricopa County Department of Public Health identified the first two state's lab confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) this season. In 2011, Maricopa County experienced a mild West Nile virus season with 45 lab confirmed cases. In 2010, Maricopa County recorded its second worst West Nile virus season with 115 lab confirmed cases. (The worst season was in 2004 with 355 confirmed cases.)

So far this season, Maricopa County Environmental Services department has identified 55 WNV positive mosquito samples and 2 WNV positive dead birds. Environmental Services department continues conducting its year-round surveillance of mosquitoes: collecting samples and running tests on samples collected from many locations throughout the Valley.

"It is important to remember that the more we prevent mosquitoes from breeding, the more we can control this virus," said John Kolman, Environmental Services Department director. "This is why it is very important that not only this Holiday but through all this monsoon season we all do our part, eliminate any mosquito breeding sites in our yards and also work 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.

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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