



# Maricopa County

## News Release

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## **Mosquitoes are Here Protect yourself this Memorial Day Weekend**

Memorial Day weekend is upon us, and thousands of Maricopa County residents will join in honoring the brave men and women who have died for our freedoms. With so many people visiting cemeteries or participating in different outdoor activities and events, it is important to protect our families and ourselves from mosquitoes and the risk of contracting West Nile virus (WNV). Before heading outside, the Maricopa County departments of Environmental Services and Public Health would like to remind you to take precautions against this potentially deadly virus.

“The recent case of Saint Louis Encephalitis that claimed the life of a Valley man, remind us that West Nile and other mosquito-borne diseases are a threat to Maricopa County residents,” said Dr. Bob England, Acting Director of Maricopa County Public Health Department. “It is important to remember that prevention is the best tool we have against West Nile virus.”

Protect yourself in order to prevent mosquitoes from making you their next meal. If possible, wear light colored clothing with long sleeves and pants. Wherever you may be this weekend, bring your insect repellent along and please follow label instructions, especially for use on children. Share your insect repellent with those around you. If you have the opportunity to protect someone else, take it. Your consideration could save lives.

“We need to be mindful that our first protective measure should be to prevent mosquitoes from breeding”, said John Power, Maricopa County Environmental Services Interim Director. “We all need to remember to get rid of any stagnant water around our homes, and work with our neighbors to make sure that our communities are mosquito free,” Power added.

“Maricopa County is leading an aggressive campaign to help reduce the mosquito populations and the risks of West Nile Virus. It is crucial that residents report to the County any green pools or other mosquito problems in their area,” said Joy Rich, Assistant Manager for Maricopa County.

Take these precautions to prevent WNV infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing 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.

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- If possible, avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent when exposure to mosquitoes cannot be avoided.

So far this year, Maricopa County Department of Public Health has not received any laboratory-confirmation of human cases of West Nile Virus infection. Last year, Maricopa County had 79 confirmed West Nile Virus cases, and 4 deaths.

For more information on West Nile virus, as well as for WNV dead bird drop-off locations, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, and for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 or visit [www.maricopa.gov/wnv](http://www.maricopa.gov/wnv)

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