



PROTECT YOURSELF

West Nile Virus



West Nile Virus and Your Property



Whether you live in the city or on the farm, on an acreage or at the cottage, you can reduce your exposure to mosquito bites by adopting personal protective measures.

- Apply an appropriate mosquito repellent (DEET-based).
- Wear loose-fitting, long sleeved, light coloured clothing.
- Decrease time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Watch extra tires. Stack and cover them in an area without grass or shrubbery.
- Gravel anywhere that livestock hoof-prints can fill with water (near dugouts, sloughs, creeks, etc.).
- Pump septic tanks more frequently and landscape discharge areas to ensure proper drainage.

Mosquitoes will readily enter a building so check screens on your windows and doors, gazebo or deck. Screens are an effective barrier if they are properly maintained.

- Regularly check all screens for holes or tears.
- Screens should fit snugly into their frames.
- Screen doors should always open toward the outdoors.

On Your Property



It is vital to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes may lay their eggs. Even small amounts of water left standing for a week may produce mosquitoes.

- Clear yards of debris and regularly clean and empty eavestroughs, pool covers, and other items that collect water.

Maintaining Standing Water

You probably have standing water that you need to maintain like rain barrels, ornamental ponds, troughs, dugouts, creeks or sloughs. To prevent them from becoming good sites for mosquitoes:

- Fit rain barrels with tight lids or screens.
- Tightly seal around any downspouts.
- Empty and clean bird baths weekly.
- Install aeration pumps on ornamental ponds and water gardens.
- Flush water troughs for livestock once a week.



You can determine if mosquito larva are present by “dipping” standing water. Using a white container (like a yogurt container), skim the surface and look for dark, worm-like wrigglers bending their bodies in an “S” shape.

However, not all standing water produces mosquitoes. Large, deeper wetlands with open water are not good habitats. Sunlit, shallow (less than 60 centimetres, or two feet deep) wet areas with plants growing at the edge are of most concern.

Using Larvicides

If you cannot eliminate standing water around your home or yard, you can apply a biological control agent called larvicide. The most common is *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* or Bti (Aquabac® or Vectobac®).

- The active ingredient in Bti occurs naturally and therefore has little negative effect on mammals, fish or other wildlife and will not kill other beneficial insects in the water.
- Bti will only kill mosquitoes in the larval stage (five to six millimeters long), but not adult mosquitoes.
- Bti will not prevent mosquitoes from laying their eggs in a particular water body; it can only kill larvae that are already there.
- Follow the directions as provided by the manufacturer.



You may hear of alternate methods to control mosquito larvae, including adding cooking oil or dish detergent to the water. It is unclear how effective or safe these methods are; Saskatchewan Health recommends that you eliminate standing water or make standing water more safe through the methods mentioned on this fact sheet.

Foggers, Zappers, and Bats

Adult mosquitoes are more difficult to kill than mosquito larvae and you may investigate tools to help you rid your yard of these pests.

- Hand-held foggers using chemical pesticides are available. However, these pesticides are more toxic than Bti; it is recommended that you limit the amount and frequency of application and follow the manufacturer’s directions.
- Bug zappers, mosquito magnets, citronella candles and citrosa plants do not reduce mosquito numbers enough to reduce the risk of becoming infected with WNV.
- Although there are animals (bats and some birds) that eat mosquitoes, they do not eat enough mosquitoes to reduce the risk of WNV.

