Mosquito Control and Prevention

The Mosquito:
Mosquitoes are small flying insects that bite humans and animals to feed on blood. They may cause irritation by biting or may carry diseases. Only female mosquitoes feed on blood; males feed from plant sugars.

The Mosquito Lifecycle:
All mosquitoes reproduce in the water and it can take only a week to go from eggs to adults.

- Mosquito eggs usually float on water. The eggs only take a few days to hatch.
- Larvae or “wigglers” breathe through a tube at the water’s surface. They shed their skin four times, growing rapidly. On the fourth molt they turn into pupae.
- Pupae or “tumblers” cannot eat. When they are fully mature, pupae shed their skins and adults emerge.
- Newly emerged adults rest on the surface of the water until they’re strong enough to fly away. Females can live over three weeks during the summer.

Protect Yourself:
Avoiding mosquito bites can protect you and your family from contracting disease.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever outdoors if possible.
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you’re outdoors with babies.
- Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk, and early evening, which are peak mosquito times.
- Install or repair tight-fitting windows and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- Report neglected or abandoned swimming pools/hot tubs/fish ponds to Vector Control.
- Apply insect repellent in moderation to exposed skin, chose a repellent that contains DEET, IR3535, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Before using an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer’s DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product. Avoid applying repellent to the hands of children.
- Spray or purchase clothing with repellents containing permethrin since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. Do not apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin.
- Vitamin B-1 and “ultrasonic” devices are not effective in preventing mosquito bites.

Our Services:
- Find and treat existing mosquito breeding sources
- Prevent new sources from occurring
- Educate residents and county stakeholders on how to prevent mosquito breeding
- Protect public health and quality of life

We work with city, county, state, and federal agencies toward permanent correction of:
- Street catch basins
- Subdivision drains
- Road side ditches
- Flood channels
- Neglected pools

Scan here to get real-time updates and news from the Vector Control App.

Santa Clara County Vector Control District
1580 Berger Drive
San Jose, CA. 95112
408-918-4770
www.sccvector.org

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Front photo courtesy of CDC/PH Library
Mosquito Facts:
- Bite using needle-like mouthparts
- Wings are longer than body
- Always breed in water
- May carry diseases

Look-a-Likes:
These insects are commonly mistaken for mosquitoes but are generally harmless. Pictures are shown on a finger.

Midges:
- Cannot bite
- Body longer than wings
- Develop in mud on bottom of lakes and ponds
- Same size as mosquitoes

Crane Flies:
- Have a proboscis but cannot bite
- Fly very poorly making a buzzing sound
- Develop in soil or water
- Larger than mosquitoes

Fungus Gnat:
- Cannot bite (no proboscis)
- Develop in fungus or moist decaying vegetable matter
- Problem indoors where potted plants are found

Mosquito-Borne Diseases:
As a female mosquito feeds, she may transmit disease-causing organisms from infected to non-infected hosts. The three most significant diseases in California are:

West Nile Virus:
- First appeared in California in 2002
- Birds are the main carriers, but WNV also affects humans and horses
- Symptoms range from none to mild flu-like symptoms, but some have severe neurological symptoms and death

Encephalitis:
- St. Louis and Western Equine Encephalomyelitis
- Both are carried by birds
- Mosquitoes that feed on these birds pass it to the humans they bite
- Symptoms range from mild flu-like symptoms to severe brain complications that can cause death

Dog Heartworm:
- Carried by the Western treehole mosquito (Aedes sierrensis)
- Dogs, coyotes, and foxes can develop serious, possibly fatal infections

Mosquito Control:
- Don’t Breed Mosquitoes Around Your Home
  Mosquitoes can breed in any stagnant water even in small containers.

Don’t Breed Mosquitoes Around Your Home
Mosquito Fish
Gambusia affinis, or “mosquito fish”, eat mosquito larvae. Vector control will deliver and place mosquito fish free of charge for stocking ornamental ponds or unused swimming pools.

- Don’t need to be fed
- Don’t need special environment for breeding
- Only need to provide clean chloramine-free water

If you find a crow, jay, magpie, or raven that has recently died please contact the California Department of Public Health Dead Bird Hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or online at westnile.ca.gov to arrange pick up and testing for WNV.