

# 2011 Flood: Protection from Mosquito-Borne Illnesses

As the flood waters recede and residents return home, the Mississippi State Department of Health reminds you to rid your property of all standing water to reduce the risk of contracting a mosquito borne illness such as West Nile virus.

West Nile virus is transmitted primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. People cannot become infected through ordinary contact with an infected bird, horse or human.

## Prevent Mosquito Breeding Around Your Home:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers.
- Remove all discarded tires on the property. Used tires have become the most common mosquito breeding sites in the country.
- Remove all leaf debris.
- Close garbage can lids. Be sure water does not collect in the bottom of garbage cans.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in bird baths frequently (every 2-3 days).
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edge of ponds.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property.
- Repair damaged or torn window and door screens.
- Remove outdoor pet food and water dishes that are not being used.
- Flush livestock water troughs twice a week.
- Check around construction sites or do-it-yourself improvements to ensure that proper backfilling and grading prevent drainage problems.

## Protect Yourself:

- Avoid mosquitoes whenever possible. Stay indoors or take personal protective measures, especially between dusk and dawn, which are peak mosquito biting times.
- Use mosquito repellent with DEET. Products with up to 30 percent DEET will provide adequate protection under most conditions.
- Use DEET concentrations of 10 percent or less on children ages two years to 12 years of age, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For children less than two years of age, parents should consult their pediatrician. Always follow the manufacturer's directions for use as printed on the product label.

Mississippi's toll-free West Nile virus hotline: 1-877-WST-NILE (1-877-978-6453)

The CDC has set up public hotlines for questions concerning West Nile virus:

- English: 1-888-246-2675
- Spanish: 1-888-246-2857
- Hearing-impaired: 1-866-874-2646



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# Checklist for Mosquito Breeding Around the Home

	Potential Breeding Site	How to Correct
	Any container capable of holding water	Turn over, throw away, drill holes, or empty weekly
	Bird baths	Dump or flush weekly
	Pet dishes	Rinse weekly
	Children's toys	Store inside or turn them so water cannot collect
	Potted plants with saucers	Flush or empty saucers weekly
	Rain gutters	Keep clean so water runs freely
	Tarps/plastic covers	Drain water trapped in folds and arrange so water drains off
	Garbage cans/lids - recycle bins	Drill holes in bottom of cans and bins and make sure lids stay on cans or are turned over
	Watering cans, buckets	Store inside or turn upside down
	Rain barrels	Cover with screening
	Ornamental ponds without fish	Aerate/filter water, apply larvicide or stock with fish (fish will eat the mosquito larvae)
	Tires	Properly dispose of old tires or fill with sand to prevent collection of water
	Tire swings	Drill holes to allow water to drain
	Boats/Canoes/Kayaks	Pump out bilges. Turn over small boats, canoes and kayaks.
	Leaky plumbing	Examine all exterior plumbing and repair any leaks (particularly exterior faucets)
	Air conditioner run-off	Make sure A/C run-off can adequately drain and not puddle
	Wheelbarrows	Turn over when not in use or store inside
	Children's wading pools	Turn over kiddie pools when not in use. Drill holes in lip if water collects when overturned
	Swimming pools (unused or abandoned)	Larvicide with mosquito dunks according to label (there is no breeding in maintained pools)
	Swimming pool covers	Make sure cover is drained
	Flat roofs	Check for puddling water
	Under decks and raised homes	Fill in depressions and make sure any ground-covering plastic is not holding water
	Voids under slabs or cracked slabs	Seal openings with sand or concrete
	Pipes for plumbing and elbowed fittings	Keep spare pipes and fittings covered, or arrange pipes and fittings so they will not hold water
	Drainage ditches and culverts	Make sure ditches and culverts are cleaned of all debris so water can flow freely
	Corrugated pipe on gutter downspout	Replace with smooth pipe (mosquitoes will breed in the grooves)
	Base of portable basketball goals/umbrellas	Fill with sand instead of water, or if water is used, make sure cap is screwed on
	Grills	Make sure cover is on and vents are closed
	Plants (bromeliad, elephant ears, etc.)	Water collects in the plant axils and breeds mosquitoes. Flush plants weekly
	French drains/other outside drains	Make sure water flows smoothly. Apply larvicide if water stands in bottom of drain
	Bamboo	Cut bamboo stumps all the way to ground so they can't hold water
	Open fence posts	Make sure plastic and chain link fence posts are capped
	Plastic sheets for weed control	Use a landscape fabric instead of plastic so water can flow through
	Low areas in landscape	Fill and regrade or plant
	Individual sewer treatment systems	Make sure that the outflow is not pooling up
	Tree holes/hollow trees/ stumps	Fill cavities with sand, or flush weekly
	Lawn ornaments	Check for areas that hold water and drain or flush weekly
	Home irrigation	Over-watering can lead to standing water in the landscape and containers
	Yard debris (clippings and dead leaves)	Don't rake or blow lawn debris into storm drains, so that water can flow freely
	Trash and garbage	Make sure all trash is picked up (mosquitoes will breed in items as small as soda caps)