



NUMBER: 23-03  
FOR RELEASE: Immediate

DATE: April 11, 2023  
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## A Recipe for Concern: Heavy Rains Mixed with Warmer Weather Bring Mosquitoes

**Stanislaus County** - Both the Turlock and Eastside Mosquito Abatement Districts would like to remind residents to take precautions to prevent mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases. With the abundance of water and increasing temperatures, the mosquito population will also be increasing. Mosquitoes can spread diseases such as West Nile Virus and Saint Louis Encephalitis Virus. In 2022, mosquitoes were responsible for causing 209 human and 16 horse cases of WNV in California. Of the WNV cases in California, there were 15 human and one horse case in Stanislaus County. There was also an additional human case of St. Louis Encephalitis Virus in Stanislaus County. 2023 will be a challenging year for residents and the Districts due to the heavy rainfall, creating many opportunities for mosquitoes to breed.

The Districts urge residents to “Dump and Drain” standing water around their properties to prevent mosquitoes from becoming established around their homes and to protect themselves and their families. Dumping out standing water is particularly important with the county’s newest species, *Aedes aegypti*, which likes to live near homes and is an aggressive daytime biter of people. This species only needs 4 to 5 days to complete its lifecycle and their eggs can last up to a year before they hatch. Since they like to lay their eggs on the sides of containers, it is recommended that anything holding water that can’t be completely removed such as a pet bowl, should be scrubbed every 3 days to remove the eggs before adding fresh water.

*Aedes aegypti* is very difficult to control and will require the help of all residents to reduce their population each season. “Take a moment to look around your property and dump and drain any items with standing water that can allow mosquitoes to develop. *Aedes aegypti* only require a bottlecap full of water to start the next generation,” said David Heft, General Manager for Turlock Mosquito Abatement District.

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The Districts also anticipate challenges with larger amounts of water from neglected swimming pools and flooding along the rivers. The Districts monitor and treat neglected swimming pools which can produce numerous mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile Virus. In addition to the neglected pools currently being monitored, many pools that were empty will now have water in them so they may begin to breed mosquitoes. Contact your District if you find a suspect pool.

The Districts will maintain surveillance of current and future flooding along river corridors, which based on past history, will also produce an abundance of mosquitoes. As snowmelt releases continue through the spring into summer, residents often experience problems with mosquitoes traveling away from the rivers towards adjacent urban areas. The Districts will inspect and treat those areas as needed.

**Help reduce mosquitoes and mosquito diseases by following these guidelines:**

- Dump and drain containers or other items holding standing water
- Remove saucers under pots
- Repair leaky faucets and broken sprinklers
- Dump and scrub (every 3 days) any outdoor containers holding water: pet dishes, birdbaths, fountains, kiddie pools, etc.
- Cover trash cans, bins, buckets, and tubs with fitted lids and make sure they drain well
- Remove old tires, tarps, buckets, junk, and miscellaneous containers that can hold water
- Re-direct sprinklers so containers do not fill with water
- Clean out rain gutters and drains in the yard
- Use well-fitted door and window screens
- Avoid overwatering yard and plant overgrowth
- Defend yourself against mosquitoes using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Properly cover (screen) or remove rain barrels
- Report neglected swimming pools to your local mosquito and vector control agency.

There are two mosquito abatement districts to serve residents in Stanislaus County. Residents north of the Tuolumne River should contact the Eastside Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 522-4098. Residents south of the Tuolumne River should contact the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at [turlockmosquito.org](http://turlockmosquito.org) or (209) 634-1234.

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