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Mosquito Threat Increases During Spring Flood Season

Due to heavy rainfall and flooding throughout Central Texas and Williamson County, residents need to be aware of an increase in the mosquito population. More rain means more mosquito breeding. As the flood waters recede, the ponds and water traps left behind will be an attractive breeding ground. Mosquitoes that breed in them hatch about seven to ten days after a heavy rain. However, flood water mosquitoes do not carry the West Nile virus and usually die out in about a week or two. Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) Deputy Director Deborah Marlow says, “With continuous rainfall, we will see a jump in the mosquito population, but the majority of those mosquitoes do not carry the West Nile virus. When the rains subside, however, we could see an increase in the types of mosquitoes that carry arboviruses, like West Nile, because they like to breed in stagnant waters.” In response to recent flooding and the potential mosquito threat, the WCCHD Integrated Mosquito Management Program will set up additional mosquito traps over the next four weeks throughout Williamson County to test for arboviruses.

There are important protection measures that all individuals can practice to limit the risk of West Nile Virus and reduce mosquito exposure in general.

This includes the following:

Drain:

- Drain standing water from flower pots and boxes, wading pools and wheelbarrows, etc.
- Keep birdbaths and pet dishes cleaned regularly
- Remove tires, buckets, and other water holding objects
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools or drain and cover, if not in use
- Prevent water from accumulating on pool covers
- Unclog gutters and down spouts
Defend:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET, (N,N-diethyl-metatoulamide)
- Using the right insect repellent and other preventive actions can discourage ticks, mosquitoes, and other biting insects from landing on you
- Repellents are available to protect you from insects and give you the length of protection you need, based on your planned activity
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when outdoors
- Make sure screens fit tightly on doors and windows

Dress:

- Wear long sleeves and pants and spray insect repellant on your clothes
- Spray clothing with repellents because mosquitoes bite through clothing

For information and updates on the West Nile virus and the mosquito control efforts in Williamson County, visit the WCCHD website at www.wcchd.org. For more information to the state’s response to the West Nile virus, go to the Texas Department of State Health Services website at www.dshs.state.tx.us.

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