FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DON’T LET MOSQUITOES TAKE A BITE OUT OF YOUR FOURTH OF JULY PLANS

Practice the 3Ds to Fight the Bite

The Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) advises the public to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites that may lead to illness. A simple way to reduce the threat is to clean up areas where mosquitoes can breed around the house. Empty or drain buckets, flower pots, old tires, or anything that holds water. Gutters should be cleaned regularly and bird baths cleaned at least weekly. Cisterns or rain barrels should be tightly sealed and screened. WCCHD Medical Entomologist Catherine Zettel Nalen says, “Over the long holiday weekend many residents may be spending more time outdoors. The most effective way to avoid getting bitten is to use an EPA-approved mosquito repellant, eliminate standing water around your house and to wear long sleeves or pants when outdoors.”

The threat of arboviruses fluctuates from year to year in Texas and depends on a variety of factors including the weather, the numbers of birds and mosquitoes that maintain and spread viruses, and human behavior. Nalen says, “We cannot predict what the mosquito threat will be this year because of the variety of factors that need to come together to spread mosquito-related illnesses. As always, we are prepared and have plans in place in case if this year turns out to be an active.” WCCHD will continue testing areas of Williamson County for West Nile virus. The Integrated Mosquito Management Program utilizes a comprehensive management strategy to identify and monitor mosquitoes that carry arboviruses, alert and educate citizens about personal protection, and test mosquitoes throughout the county weekly for the presence of viral illnesses. To date there has been one reported case of Zika in Williamson County involving a resident who contracted the virus during a trip overseas.

WCCHD’s Fight the Bite campaign encourages public awareness of the 3D’s throughout the year:

- **Dress** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors.
- **Drain** standing water in flower pots, pet dishes, or clogged gutters so mosquitos don’t have a place to breed.
- **Defend** using an EPA-approved insect repellant.

For more information and updates on the mosquito management efforts in Williamson County, visit [www.wcchd.org](http://www.wcchd.org).