

# Mosquitoes

**Mosquito adults are small, flying insects that often bite and are annoying.** Female mosquitoes require blood from humans or other animals to develop eggs. Mosquito larvae live and grow in ponds, objects containing standing water, and other aquatic sites. The most important consequence of mosquito bites is the transmission of organisms causing diseases such as West Nile virus. Decrease your chances of getting bitten by reducing standing water around your home, using repellents, and wearing protective clothing when outdoors.

## Eliminate standing water to minimize mosquito-friendly habitats.

- ◆ Empty water from unused garden pots and other objects. Store containers upside down, dispose, or cover them, so mosquitoes cannot lay eggs.
- ◆ Change water in pet dishes, watering troughs, and bird baths at least weekly.
- ◆ Avoid overwatering, which can lead to standing water.
- ◆ Keep litter and garden debris out of street gutters. Clean rain gutters at least once a year to remove debris.
- ◆ Remove excess vegetation in ponds, stock with fish, or use *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) products such as Mosquito Dunks.
- ◆ Maintain water quality in swimming pools with chemical treatments. Keep water off swimming pool covers. Drain water from plastic pools when not in use, or cover so mosquitoes cannot lay eggs.
- ◆ Fill open tree holes with sand or mortar.

## What is the West Nile virus?

The West Nile virus is spread by mosquitoes that get the virus from infected birds. Once infected, mosquitoes then transfer the virus to humans and other animals. Infected humans may become ill. The disease usually is most serious in children, people with weakened immune systems, and the elderly.

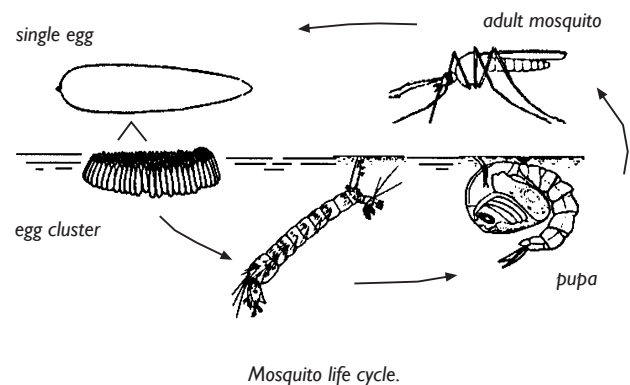
For more information on West Nile virus, contact the California Department of Health Services:  
[www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov)



## The best defense is to avoid mosquito bites!

- ◆ Be sure your doors and windows are properly screened.
- ◆ Avoid being outdoors at times of the day when mosquito activity is high in your area, especially at dawn and dusk.
- ◆ Wear long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, socks, and a hat if you must be outside when mosquitoes are present.
- ◆ Use insect repellents containing DEET, picardin or the slightly less effective oil of lemon eucalyptus (PMD). Repellents containing other ingredients are less effective, so you must frequently reapply them.
- ◆ Outdoor insecticide sprays can provide temporary reduction of adult mosquitoes but have no lasting effect.

Contact your local mosquito abatement or vector control district for more information and assistance with managing mosquitoes. Mosquito & Vector Control Association of California: [www.mvca.org](http://www.mvca.org).



Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.

For more information about managing pests, contact your **University of California Cooperative Extension office** listed under the county government pages of your phone book or visit the UC IPM Web site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu).



**What you use in your landscape affects our rivers and oceans!**