



# HELPING PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS

**The West Nile Virus is mainly transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito; therefore, on-going elimination of mosquito breeding is the key to prevention.**

Residents' participation in the elimination of standing water around the home is critically important. Homeowners can help curb the mosquito population by monitoring common mosquito breeding grounds including:

- **Bird baths** - change the water at least once every three days, cleaning the bath on a regular basis
- **Outdoor pet dishes** - change the water daily, not only to prevent mosquito breeding, but also for your pet's health
- **Flower pots** - remove any overflow water that has collected in the dish beneath the pot or the pot itself
- **Ponds** - consider purchasing mosquito-eating fish if the pond is serving as a mosquito breeding site and cannot be drained
- **Tires**; if you use one as a swing, drill a hole large enough in the bottom of it to drain any water
- **Gutters, splash guards and extension pipes** - clean and remove debris on a regular basis
- **Wheelbarrows (store upright), watering cans and decorative yard ornaments**
- **Wading pools, pool toys and children's toys**
- **Trash can lids and recycling bins (store upside down, drill holes in handles and rims)**
- **Puddles/ditches in your yard or driveway** - fill or drain ditches and swampy areas, and other soil depressions and remove, drain, or fill tree holes and stumps with mortar or sealant to prevent accumulation of water
- **Swimming pools (not in use)** - keep pool water aerated and chlorinated; cover when not in use. Drain water that collects on pool covers.

**In addition to eliminating standing water around the home, residents should take the following precautions:**

- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk, when possible
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever outdoors, weather permitting
- Make sure screen doors and windows are in good condition
- When going outside, use an insect repellent containing DEET on skin or clothing, or a repellent-containing permethrin on clothing. DO NOT use repellents on children less than 3 years old.

**ALWAYS USE REPELLANTS ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABEL**

There are additional steps that individuals can take to minimize mosquito breeding on their property:

- Dispose of or remove buckets, aluminum cans, plastic sheeting, or other refuse that can hold water
- Remove any standing water on flat roofs or around structures
- Repair leaking faucets and air conditioners that produce puddles for several days
- Eliminate standing water and seepage around animal watering troughs, cisterns, and septic tanks.
- Be sure that rainbarrel screens are intact and that access covers fit tightly
- Irrigate lawns and gardens carefully to prevent water from standing for several days

For more information visit the Ocean County Health Department website at [www.ochd.org](http://www.ochd.org) or the Ocean County Mosquito Commission website at [www.oceancountymosquito.org](http://www.oceancountymosquito.org).