



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2016

CONTROL MOSQUITOES THROUGH REDUCTION, REPELLENT

Public Health Department Reduces Breeding Areas, Asks Residents to Block the Bite

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Over the past few years, and especially the past several months, awareness of the potentially dangerous conditions associated with illnesses spread through mosquito bites has increased. Although most of these diseases are focused in more tropical destinations, mosquitoes can be a problem for St. Charles County residents — especially as warmer temperatures return.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and other agencies have issued travel notices in response to the Zika virus disease (www.cdc.gov/Zika). Many cases have been reported in the Caribbean Islands, Central America and South America, but there have been no incidences of local transmission in the United States. Because Zika has been linked to serious birth defects and other poor pregnancy outcomes, pregnant women, those who may become pregnant, and their male partners should consult with their medical providers before traveling to these regions and take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

One disease that has been found across the contiguous United States is the West Nile virus. While instances of the virus are common in insects and birds, it is important to note that cases of West Nile infection in humans are rare. For example: St. Charles County has recorded only five local cases since 2010. Only about 20 percent of those infected with the West Nile virus display the common symptoms — which include fever, headache, body ache, vomiting and rash — and fewer than one percent of those infected individuals develop more serious complications, such as brain or spinal inflammation. For additional information on the West Nile virus, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>.

Decreasing populations of nuisance pests and preventing related disease outbreaks are the primary goals of the St. Charles County Department of Public Health's Mosquito Control program. Coordinated through the department's Division of Environmental Health and Protection, the program works with the community to monitor traditional problem areas and applies specific products as needed. Staff members target habitats to control larvae before maturity and treat adult populations with small amounts of insecticide to reduce numbers.

Operating throughout unincorporated St. Charles County, the program also contracts with several municipalities to target mosquito populations in their communities. Residents living in unincorporated St. Charles County or within the city limits of Augusta, Cottleville, Dardenne Prairie, Flint Hill, Lake Saint Louis, Portage des Sioux, Weldon Spring, Weldon Spring Heights and Wentzville, who are concerned about nuisance mosquitoes, should visit <http://www.sccmo.org/959/Mosquito-Control> to request assistance. Those living in O'Fallon, St. Charles and St. Peters should contact their respective city halls regarding mosquito abatement efforts.

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While the Department of Public Health’s efforts will reduce the mosquito population in the county, individuals must also take personal responsibility to protect themselves and eliminate breeding grounds. Mosquitoes can be discouraged from biting with the use of insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, IR 3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus when outdoors. In addition, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and staying indoors during dawn and dusk periods may minimize opportunities for mosquito bites. As mosquito larvae requires seven to 14 days of still water for development, taking steps to drain areas where water settles, cleaning clogged gutters and disrupting fountains, ponds or bird baths will eliminate household breeding grounds.

Throughout the year, the Division of Environmental Health and Protection works with area businesses and organizations to promote healthy conditions in St. Charles County. To learn how the division helps to ensure public safety, please call (636) 949-1800 or visit <http://www.sccmo.org/760/Environmental-Division>.

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