

WEST NILE SENIOR CENTER & LONG TERM CARE RECOMMENDATIONS (Infection Control Risk Assessment)

What steps can a nursing home take to prevent West Nile virus?

A typical yard can generate thousands of mosquitoes every week. The key to prevention is an infection control risk assessment (ICRA) and taking the appropriate precautions to reduce the mosquito population. The ICRA should include an evaluation of places where even small amounts of standing water may accumulate. An ICRA should be performed at least weekly or more frequently during and after the rainy season (see Appendix A). The following are general measures to reduce mosquitoes at your facility.

- Drain Standing Water

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your facility for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water, such as:

- At least once or twice a week, empty water from flower pots, pet food and water dishes, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels, and cans.
- Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out.
- Remove discarded tires, and other items that could collect water.
- Be sure to check for containers or trash in places that may be hard to see, such as under bushes or under your home.

- Install or Repair Screens

Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors.

How can residents/clients be protected from West Nile virus?

If mosquitoes are abundant, nursing home residents and clients should remain indoors in the early morning and at twilight, when mosquitoes are most active. The most common repellent products contain the chemical DEET. It has been in use for more than 40 years and is still considered the most effective product according to Consumer Reports. Repellents should be used cautiously especially in children and the elderly. For additional information on the use of chemical repellents, administrators or infection control practitioners should consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) web site at <https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/prevention/>

The following is a summary of the CDC recommendations.

- Persons using repellents should read and follow the manufacturers insert directions before using any chemical product on the skin of children, elderly persons and persons with open skin lesions or irritated skin.
- Repellents containing DEET should be applied sparingly to exposed skin.
- Do not spray repellents around food.
- Avoid inhaling (breathing) repellent spray.
- Repellents may irritate the eyes and mouth and should not be applied to the hands of children or other persons who commonly put their hands or fingers in their mouth.
- A higher percentage of DEET does not mean that protection is stronger; it means that protection will last longer. Choose a product that provides for the amount of time the person will be outdoors. Reapply the product if the time outdoors is extended or if mosquitoes begin to bite.
- A product containing:
 - 23.8% DEET provides an average of about 5 hours of protection.
 - 20% DEET provides an average of about 4 hours of protection.
 - 6.65% DEET provides an average of about 2 hours of protection.
- Wear long pants, long sleeve shirts and socks when outside at dawn and dusk. Spray clothing to prevent mosquitoes from biting through thin clothing. Repellents should not be used under clothing.

Appendix A

The following table has been developed to assist nursing homes, congregate living facilities, and senior centers to assess the environment for potential mosquito breeding sources. Please contact the Los Angeles County West Vector & Vector-borne Disease Control District at (310) 915-7370 for service and assistance with mosquito breeding sources.

Facility Name:			Date of Inspection:	
Inspector's Name:			Date Submitted to Administration for Review:	
Weekly Observation	Yes	No	If yes, action taken to eliminate source	Date
Rain gutters clogged				
Down spouts clogged				
Roof top air conditioners drained periodically as suggested by manufacturer				
Drain tiles not intact				
Flower pot trays/dishes contain standing water				
Trash receptacles contain standing water				
Discarded tires contain standing water				
Windows screens missing/torn				
Doors screen (kitchen, patio, etc.) missing/torn				
Ornamental ponds/fountains drained/cleaned weekly				
Bird bath drained cleaned weekly				
Pool/hot tub covers contain standing water				
Drain ditches dry				
Watering system functioning on timer; not over watering				
Empty buckets, pans, flower pots dry				
Vector control notified of standing water reservoirs such as road side ditches				
Other water collecting devices identified and emptied				
Tree holes plugged				
Rain Barrels				