

As many of you may be aware, this season's first positive mosquito sample of West Nile Virus was identified here in Gilbert. The sample was obtained by Maricopa County Environmental Services Department which maintains a year-round surveillance program.

Prevention is the most useful measure. You need to mosquito-proof your home by eliminating any potential mosquito-breeding sites. Remove any small measures of stagnant water including those that collect in potted plants, tires, bird baths and containers or bowls outside. Repair windows and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home and make certain pools and ponds are properly maintained and operational.

When outdoors, protect yourself. If possible, wear long sleeves and pants. Avoid being outdoors during dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active and feeding and wear protective clothing and insect repellent when exposure to mosquitoes cannot be avoided.

The WNV is a virus that lives in mosquitoes and birds. However, humans can sometimes be infected with the virus if they are bitten by a mosquito that is carrying the virus. People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito. The majority of people (approximately 80%) who become infected with the virus will either have no symptoms at all or very mild illness. About 20% will develop flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for a few days, though healthy people have become sick for several weeks. Person's over 50 or those that have a weakened immune system are generally at a higher risk for severe symptoms which occur in 1-3% of the case and include high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness. It is Common in areas such as Africa, West Asia and the Middle East. It first appeared in the United States in the summer of 1999, Arizona in 2003 and since then has been found in all 48 contiguous states. Experts believe WNV is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall.

If you become aware of a green pool in Gilbert, **or are** concerned about a mosquito problem involving either Town parks or a residential area please contact the Maricopa County Vector Control Hotline, # 602-506-6616 or go to the Maricopa County Vector Control's web site at:

<http://www.maricopa.gov/EnvSvc/VectorControl/>

There is very good information that you can refer citizens to concerning WNV/mosquito control available on the Town website at <http://www.gilbertaz.gov/pw/mosquito.cfm>.

For more information on WNV you can go to the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>