



PRESS RELEASE — May 10, 2016

Communications: 972-624-3156

Annual mosquito-prevention program begins

THE COLONY, Texas — For several years, the City of The Colony has followed a proactive plan of prevention and testing to address mosquito issues throughout the city. The program is particularly important now as heavy rains in recent months increase the chances for a very active mosquito season.

Through this program, areas on public property that may hold water for periods of time are identified and monitored as potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes. These standing pools of water are inspected for mosquito larvae and, if found, are treated with a larvacide, which kills the larvae before it matures into an adult mosquito. This preventative measure greatly reduces the number that hatch into adult mosquitoes.

Weekly, the City sets traps at various locations to capture adult mosquitoes that are known to carry West Nile virus (WNV) and are typically active from dusk to dawn. If a test comes back positive, localized treatments are applied and additional testing is done in the following weeks to determine if the treatment was effective. If subsequent tests determine the presence of disease in an area and/or human cases are confirmed in that vicinity, truck-mounted adulticide treatments may take place.

In 2015, there were 16 batches of mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile virus in The Colony. There were six in 2014 and one in 2013. Testing so far this season has yielded negative results.

Concerns are being raised about the Zika virus, which is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito, a known aggressive daytime biter. Human sexual transmission of the virus has also been reported in a small number of cases. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild with symptoms lasting no more than seven days; however, the virus has also been linked to potential birth defects.

The Denton County Public Health Department advises recent travelers from regions where Zika is present, as well as those with Zika virus symptoms or who have been diagnosed with Zika virus, to protect themselves from further mosquito bites and to practice safe sex. More information about Zika can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

While an aggressive surveillance and treatment program may eliminate some mosquitoes, the best prevention for everyone in the community is through education and personal protection. Personal protection begins by following the “4 Ds” listed below:

- **Dress to protect:** Wear long sleeves and long pants.
- **Dusk, daytime and dawn:** Protect yourself against mosquitoes anytime you are outside.
- **Defend:** Wear insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or an effective alternative.
- **Drain standing water:** Eliminate any water that stands for longer than five days or treat water with larvacide according to the label.

Identifying and eliminating stagnant pools of water on private property such as unused swimming pools, hot tubs, water meter boxes, bird baths, ponds, low areas, etc., is critical when it comes to preventing breeding grounds and hatching of adult mosquitoes. Even a half-inch of water standing in the saucer of a flower pot can breed mosquitoes. Treating or eliminating these areas, and wearing insect repellent with DEET (or an effective alternative) when outdoors will also help to minimize exposure to the diseases mosquitoes may carry.

The City is asking all residents to be aware of and remove potential mosquito breeding grounds on their own property, and to wear protective clothing and insect repellent when outside for activities. Spring rains are often the culprit for creating mosquito breeding grounds.

For additional information regarding mosquitoes and the City’s mosquito treatment plan, contact Community Services Director Pam Nelson at 972-624-3958, via email at pnelson@thecolonytx.gov or Chemical Applicator Shane Bartel at 469-853-1222, via email at sbartel@thecolonytx.gov, or visit www.thecolonytx.gov/Depts/PARD/mosquitocontrol.html.

To report standing water on private property, please call 972-624-3160, and be sure to provide an address associated with the issue if leaving a message.

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