



County of Rockland Department of Health NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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REVISED CORRECTED PRESS RELEASE

Health Department urges county residents to “Fight the Bite” *Take simple steps to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus*

Pomona, NY – Don't let your backyard become “Home Sweet Home” to mosquitoes this summer! The Rockland County Department of Health reminds residents that there are some simple steps they can take to “Fight the Bite” and reduce their risk of West Nile Virus.

“Though generally thought of as merely a nuisance, a bite from an infected mosquito can spread West Nile Virus, an infection that can cause serious illness, and in some cases, death. Although a person's chances of getting sick are small, those 50 and older are at highest risk for serious illness,” said Dr. Joan H. Facelle, Rockland County Commissioner of Health.

West Nile virus is very active, very early this year in New York State. There has been a human case reported in [Nassau County](#), and the virus has already been found in mosquitoes in the region and here in Rockland.

Fight the Bite by reducing the presence of mosquitoes in your surroundings, and by taking personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, plant pots, drip trays and other containers.
- Drill drain holes in the bottoms of recycling containers.
- Make sure that roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Turn over wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths twice a week.
- Remove all discarded tires.
- Clean vegetation and debris from the edges of ponds.
- Remove leaf debris from yards and gardens.
- Clean and properly chlorinate and filtrate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers or use a larvicide.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water.
- In addition to these steps to eliminate breeding grounds, make sure that all windows and doors have screens and that all screens are in good repair.

Although it is not necessary to curtail any outdoor activities, you can reduce the risk of being bitten by protecting yourself and your family in the following ways:

- Minimize outdoor activities between dusk and dawn.
- Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active.

- If you are going to be outdoors when or where mosquitoes are active, consider using an insect repellent containing DEET. Use repellents with no more than 30-percent DEET on adults and children over two years of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other experts suggest it is acceptable to apply repellents with low concentrations of DEET on infants over 2 months old. Parents concerned about products containing DEET should consult their pediatrician or health care provider for specific advice. Follow directions on the label. Some individuals can be allergic to DEET.

Call the Health Department at 845-364-3173 to report potential mosquito breeding sites, such as discarded tires or swimming pools that are not properly maintained.

For more information visit the Health Department website at www.rocklandgov.com/health.

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