

ADULT MOSQUITO SPRAYING FAQ

Q: What will trigger spraying?

A: If West Nile virus is detected in the community, the District's initial response will be to intensify its efforts to locate and reduce mosquito breeding sites, increase its levels of larvaciding in those areas in which West Nile virus has been found, and increase trapping of adult mosquitoes for disease testing. Reducing the adult mosquito population with pesticides (adulticides) registered by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be done if necessary to prevent human illness or to suppress a heavy nuisance infestation of mosquitoes. The decision to spray, by truck mounted sprayers, will be based on surveillance information or the documentation of West Nile virus activity at a level that indicates a threat to human health. Spraying will be concentrated in areas most at risk for disease occurrence and will be conducted by certified and licensed applicators. The District's aggressive campaign against mosquito larvae is intended to minimize the need to use adulticides.

Q: What pesticides will the District use for controlling adult mosquitoes?

A: When necessary, our District may use ground application of pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes that pose a health risk to the residents of San Mateo County. In the case of adulticiding, or targeting adult mosquitoes, we would use botanical insecticides (plant derived compounds) or synthetic versions of that include pyrethrins and synthetic pyrethroids, as well as piperonyl butoxide. All of the products we use are registered with the EPA and applied according to label directions by our trained and certified technicians.

Q: What risks are there to the residents of San Mateo County?

A: The risks to the public and to the environment are very low. Mosquito adulticides are applied as ultra-low-volume (ULV) sprays. ULV applications involve very small quantities of active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, typically less than 2 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risk to people and the environment. There is no need to relocate during the spraying.

Q: Where will the spraying take place?

A: The spraying will take place in areas of concern, as determined by our mosquito and disease surveillance programs. Our trained and certified technicians use a variety of surveillance techniques and treatment criteria to ensure effective mosquito control with the least amount of risk to our residents and our environment. The District's website will also show a map of the spray zone.

Q: What are the risks to the environment?

A: The risks to the public and to the environment are very low. Mosquito adulticides are applied as ultra-low-volume (ULV) sprays. ULV applications involve small quantities of active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, typically less than 2 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risk to people and the environment.

Q: Are the insecticides exclusive to West Nile virus?

A: No. The pesticides we use target a variety of mosquitoes than can transmit West Nile virus as well as other diseases.

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Q: Should I take steps to reduce exposure to pesticides during mosquito control spraying?

A: Generally, there is no need to relocate during mosquito control spraying. The pesticides have been evaluated for this use and found to pose minimal risks to human health and the environment when used according to label directions. All of the products we use are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency for controlling mosquitoes and protecting the public.

Although mosquito control pesticides pose very low risks, some people may prefer to avoid or even further minimize exposure. People who suffer from chemical sensitivities or breathing conditions such as asthma can reduce their potential for exposure by staying indoors during the application period and may want to consult their physician or local health department

Q: What if I am pregnant?

A: There are no special precautions needed for pregnant women. As always, if you have medical concerns consult your physician.

Q: Will the spraying for adult mosquitoes affect my pets?

A: Pesticides used for adult mosquito control does not affect pets. The ultra-low-volume (ULV) application rates have a significant margin of safety for mammals, birds, fish and reptiles.

Q: Will the spraying for adult mosquitoes affect local bees?

A: Although the pesticides used for adult mosquito control may be toxic to bees, at the ultra-low-volume (ULV) application rates applied late at night there should be no exposure or impact to local bees.

Q: Will the spraying for adult mosquitoes affect my lawn furniture, play equipment, toys, and garden plants?

A: There is nothing you need to do because we are spraying for adult mosquitoes. Pesticides used by the District for control of adult mosquitoes have a half-life of 1.5 days in water and 4.4 days in soil. The pesticide molecule rapidly degrades in sunlight at the soil and water surface into its constituent's elements Carbon, Hydrogen, and Oxygen. It should not affect car paints or other painted surfaces.

Q: Will the ground fogging affect fruits and vegetables?

A: The pesticides we use pose little risk to people or the environment and are labeled to spray over crops. These materials have been used extensively throughout the county in mosquito control programs for decades with no evidence to suggest harm to people, and fruits and vegetables. For fruits and vegetables, when brought home from the store a normal washing with water before consumption is suggested.

Q: Where can I get additional information regarding specific insecticides?

A: Enquiries concerning pesticides can be directed to the EPA (visit: <http://www.epa.gov>). More information can also be found at the National Pesticide Information Center – NPIC (<http://npic.orst.edu>) or toll free 1-800-858-7378.

Q: How can I receive information of spraying for adult mosquitoes?

A: Go to the District's website.