



Franklin County Public Health  
280 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4562  
(614) 525-3160  
www.myfcph.org

## Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus Q&A

### Integrated Mosquito Management Plan

#### **Can you tell me more about the Franklin County Public Health mosquito program?**

Franklin County Public Health uses an Integrated Pest Management approach with a public health focus to reduce and control disease-carrying mosquitoes. Many tools and techniques are used throughout the season to help control the mosquito population. These include:

- 1) Larviciding areas of stagnant water and storm water catch basins to prevent mosquitoes from hatching in these prime breeding sites.
- 2) Surveillance of adult mosquito populations by the use of traps.
- 3) Testing of adult mosquitoes for the presence of disease.
- 4) Adulticiding (spraying) using truck-mounted, ultra-low volume (ULV) spray units driven on public roadways to reduce adult mosquito populations.
- 5) A variety of educational materials and awareness approaches.

#### **Can you tell me more about the trapping and testing of mosquitoes?**

- Forty mosquito traps are set weekly throughout the county to identify and monitor disease-carrying mosquitoes.
- The mosquitoes in each trap are identified and grouped into pools of fifty. Based on historical data and/or high trap counts, some mosquito pools are RAMP (Rapid Analyte Measurement Platform) tested in our facility to give us quick West Nile virus (WNV) results.
- All mosquito pools are then sent to the Ohio Department of Health Laboratory for WNV testing and verification.
- This testing identifies WNV in mosquitoes and will help determine areas that may need further larviciding and/or sprayed for mosquitoes.

#### **How do you decide when to spray an area for mosquitoes?**

The trap data is evaluated weekly to determine if mosquito spraying needs to be scheduled. Several factors are considered in that decision:

- Is there a significant increase in the number of mosquitoes that can carry disease in our weekly trap locations?
- Is there a lab-confirmed or RAMP tested presence of West Nile virus (WNV) in the mosquitoes we trapped?
- Is there a history of WNV in an area?
- Are weather events or weather patterns contributing to an increase in mosquito populations?
- Has there been a confirmed human case of WNV or other mosquito-borne diseases?
- Are attempts to control mosquito populations through larviciding not been effective?
- Or, there is a public health emergency as determined by the Board of Health and/or Health Commissioner.

#### **What happens once you decide to spray for mosquitoes?**

Franklin County Public Health will immediately notify the city, township or village officials in the community scheduled to be sprayed to assure they concur. Once scheduled, all information about when and where spraying will occur is posted on the Franklin County Public Health web site ([www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org)), on social media and news releases are sent out to the media. A detailed map of spray areas is posted. Often times your community will post and share the information too. A voice recording of areas that are scheduled to be sprayed is available by calling (614) 525-BITE (2483).

#### **What type of chemical does Franklin County Public Health use to spray?**

For information on what type of chemical is used, visit our web site. Licensed and trained staff apply the pesticides which are intended specifically for mosquito control. The chemicals are registered with the U.S. EPA and Ohio Department of Agriculture, and are applied according to federal and state laws. FCPH operates truck-mounted, ultra-low volume spray units driven on public roadways that are computer controlled and calibrated to apply extremely small amounts of pesticide over large areas.

### **Do you have any other information about spraying and the environment?**

The chemicals used by Franklin County Public Health do not persist in the environment; they break down within hours in water, are destroyed rapidly by light and will decompose when exposed to air. The morning after an application, the amount of residual pesticide on exterior surfaces will be negligible.

To reduce your exposure during spraying, you can take the following precautionary steps:

- Remain indoors with windows closed when spraying is taking place, if possible.
- Bring laundry and toys indoors before spraying begins. Wash with soap and water if exposed to pesticides during spraying.
- Bring your pets indoors. Cover ornamental fishponds during spray hours to avoid direct exposure.
- Outdoor tables, furniture, toys and play equipment can be covered or can be rinsed off with water following the application, but it is not necessary.
- Wash exposed skin surfaces with soap and water if you come in contact with pesticides.
- Wash any exposed fruits and vegetables with water before storing, cooking or eating.
- Wait about one hour before allowing children to play in areas that have been sprayed.
- For your safety and the safety of our operators, do not approach or follow a spray truck when it is operating. If you are in a vehicle, please try to find an alternate route.

There is no need to relocate during spraying. Consult your physician if you have specific medical concerns regarding the spraying.

### **What if I don't want my property sprayed?**

Franklin County Public Health maintains a "Do Not Spray" registry of residents who request a limited shut off of mosquito spraying. FCPH will make a good faith effort to shut off truck-mounted aerosol equipment within 150 feet of a registered property. This registry will be rendered inactive if the Health Commissioner declares a public health emergency where treatment is indicated. In the event of a public health emergency, FCPH will attempt to contact members of the registry prior to treatment of their property. To request to be added to the "Do Not Spray" registry, visit [www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org) or call (614) 525-BITE.

### **Should I be worried there is WNV in our community?**

It is not unexpected to see WNV in mosquitoes in our community. WNV has been present for many years and historically begins to show up every June or July.

### **How can I protect myself and my family from WNV?**

- Wear insect repellent containing DEET (follow package directions)
- Limit outdoor activity at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active
- Eliminate all standing water around your home (mosquitoes breed in water and it doesn't take much)

### **How do people get sick from WNV and what are the symptoms?**

WNV can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. The last human case of WNV reported in Franklin County was in 2006. It can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Symptoms include mild fever, headache and body aches, often with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. In some individuals especially adults over 50 and those with compromised immune systems, WNV can cause serious illness that affects brain tissue. Less than 1% of people bitten by an infected mosquito will become severely ill.

### **Where can I find more information about mosquitoes and the WNV?**

Visit [www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org). Residents are encouraged to check the web site often for spray schedules and maps. Other mosquito information including trap and testing data are also posted there. You can also call (614) 525-BITE (2483) if you have any questions or to report problem areas in your community. This is a voice mail system and all calls will be returned within one business day.