

Mosquitos

Mosquitos and West Nile Virus

The word "mosquito" is Spanish for "little fly", and they have been around for over 30 million years. These experts at finding people to bite have a battery of sensors designed to track their prey, including:

- Heat sensors - Mosquitos can find warm-blooded mammals and birds very easily once they get close enough.
- Chemical sensors - mosquitos can sense carbon dioxide and lactic acid up to 100 feet (36 meters) away. Mammals and birds gives off these gases as part of their normal breathing. Certain chemicals in sweat also seem to attract mosquitos (people who don't sweat much don't get nearly as many mosquito bites).
- Visual sensors - if you are wearing clothing that contrasts with the background, and especially if you move while wearing that clothing, mosquitos can see you and zero in on you.
- Only female mosquitos bite and spread the virus. No human vaccine is available and there is no cure.

Facts

- All mosquitos must have water in which to complete their life cycle.
- Only seven days are required to complete their life cycle (egg to adult) during warm weather.
- Mosquitos do not develop in grass or shrubbery, although flying adults frequently rest in these areas during daylight hours.
- Only the female mosquito bites to obtain a blood meal. The male mosquito feeds only on plant nectar.
- The female mosquito may live as long as three weeks during the Summer or many months over the Winter in order to lay her eggs in the following Spring.
- West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease. For more information about mosquitos and West Nile Virus click on the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health 'Fight The Bite' website below. This website includes Prevention Tips for Campers and Hikers, and explains how to eliminate common backyard mosquito-breeding sources.

www.SDFightTheBite.com