

2 February 2023

Murray Valley encephalitis virus detected in Temora

Communities across NSW are encouraged to take measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites following the detection of Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) virus in mosquitoes in Temora.

In recent weeks, MVE has been detected in mosquitoes in several towns in the Riverina.

Murrumbidgee Local Health District's Director of Public Health, Alison Nikitas, is encouraging the community to take actions to avoid being bitten.

"With many people still enjoying a range of outdoor activities in the summer weather, it remains very important that everyone takes the appropriate steps to protect against mosquito bites," Ms Nikitas said.

"There is no vaccination or specific treatment for MVE and the best way to avoid infection is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, which are most active between dusk and dawn.

"Avoiding mosquito bites will also protect against other mosquito-borne infections including Japanese encephalitis, Ross River Fever and Barmah Forest virus."

Ms Nikitas said most people who are infected with the virus that causes MVE do not have any symptoms.

"Only a small proportion of people infected with the virus will experience symptoms, which include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, and muscle aches. Rarely, it causes severe neurological illness with headache, convulsions and reduced consciousness in some cases. Among those who get a severe infection, some may die or have lifelong neurological complications," she said.

People in NSW are urged to take action to prevent mosquito bites to protect against mosquito-borne viruses. Protect yourself and your family by:

- wearing light, loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts, long pants and covered footwear and socks, especially around dusk and dawn
- applying repellent to all areas of exposed skin, using repellents that contain DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- re-applying repellent regularly, particularly after swimming, being sure to always apply sunscreen first and then apply repellent

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- using insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units and mosquito coils to repel mosquitos (mosquito coils should only be used outside)
- covering openings such as windows and doors with insect screens and checking there are no gaps in them
- removing items that might collect water (such as old tyres, empty pots) outside your house where mosquitoes can breed
improving drainage on your property so that water does not become stagnant.

The primary hosts of MVE virus are waterbirds such as herons and egrets. Detection of MVE is likely related to recent rainfall and flooding.

MVE virus is transmitted to humans through a bite of an infected mosquito. The virus cannot be transmitted between humans.

For further information and ways to protect yourself visit the [NSW Health website](#).

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