



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Health Department Treating Catch Basins to Combat Mosquito Breeding *Curbing Mosquito Population Cuts Risk of West Nile Virus*

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) will be treating stormwater catch basins in select areas of the City of Pittsburgh with pesticides to combat the breeding of mosquitoes.

This is the 21st consecutive year ACHD will be conducting such treatments.

“Catch basins are an optimal breeding habitat for mosquitoes in an urban environment like Pittsburgh,” explained ACHD Housing and Community Environment Program Manager Lori Horowitz. “The types of mosquitoes that breed in catch basins have the potential of spreading diseases, such as West Nile virus.”

The treatments begin on Monday, June 6, and will continue through Friday, June 10, between the hours of 4:30 p.m.-9 p.m., but may be postponed when heavy rains are forecast. The Health Department is treating approximately 10,000 catch basins in certain areas of Pittsburgh, including portions of neighborhoods in the East End, West End, North Side and South Side which have a history in previous years of West Nile activity.

The product being used, FourStar, is non-toxic to people, pets and aquatic life. The active ingredient, a naturally occurring soil bacteria, kills mosquito larvae. Small blocks of the product will be deposited in the catch basins and treated basins will be marked with bright green paint.

Catch basins that hold water are breeding grounds for mosquitoes during the summer. Basins will be treated with a product that targets mosquito larvae so there will be fewer flying, biting adults with the potential to transmit diseases to people and pets. The Health Department focuses on treating catch basins in densely populated areas with historically higher rates of West Nile cases, but there are several things that residents can do to limit possible exposure to mosquitoes.

“Residents can greatly reduce the mosquito population by eliminating and treating breeding sites on their own properties,” said ACHD Director Dr. Debra Bogen. “Mosquitoes can breed in as little as ½ inch deep stagnant water, so be sure to pay close attention to potential breeding sites like stagnant water in tires, unused swimming pools, buckets and clogged gutters.”

Inexpensive, but effective, pesticides like what ACHD uses are available at hardware stores and home improvement centers. These products typically are effective at fending off mosquitos for at least 30 days. Residents can also hire a pest operator to treat their property and identify potential areas that could be creating breeding sites.

There are also steps that residents can take to prevent mosquito breeding and sheltering. When possible, residents should:

- Drain all standing water from the property, such as saucers below flower pots, hot tub covers, wading pools, hollow stumps and trash containers. Remove any tires or car parts or store them indoors.
- Use pumps that circulate water in permanent ponds or water features.

- Clean out clogged roof gutters and maintain drains, clearing them of leaf litter.
- Cut back overgrown vegetation, particularly if it is growing in the shade, and do not over water your yard. Keep grass cut short and let the ground and the soil in potted plans dry on the surface before watering. Keep your ground clear of leaf litter.

To report potential mosquito breeding sites, contact the Health Department by completing its [online form](#) or calling 412-687-2243.

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