Mosquito Control and Mosquito-borne Illness Prevention
Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the County spraying for mosquitoes in my community?

The County of San Diego Vector Control Program proactively has traps and inspects for mosquito breeding throughout our communities and when warranted, sprays in specific areas as a preventive measure to prevent human illness and control disease-transmitting mosquitoes. Mosquitoes may transmit many diseases including dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika. In an effort to reduce the potential of a local transmission of disease in your community, the Vector Control Program is implementing adult mosquito control efforts and elimination of sources for mosquito-breeding in an area where a suspect case of mosquito-borne illness has been identified and where the mosquito capable of transmitting that illness is also present.

Am I at risk for getting Zika, chikungunya or dengue?

Currently San Diego County does not have any locally-acquired cases of Zika, dengue and chikungunya. To further reduce the potential for a local transmission, the Vector Control Program is implementing adult mosquito control efforts and elimination of sources for mosquito-breeding.

What can I do to further reduce my risks?

- Prevent mosquito breeding sites! Look for and dump out standing water. Eliminate standing water. Clean containers holding water (indoors and outdoors) on a weekly basis.
- Protect yourself! Make sure screens are on windows and doors and are in good condition, apply Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, picaridin, or IR3535, and wear long sleeves and pants.
- Report possible mosquito activity including mosquito bites received during the day.

What if I'm pregnant? Or considering getting pregnant?

Take all the above measures to Prevent breeding sites, Protect yourself, and Report possible mosquito activity as mentioned above. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women. In addition, let your medical provider(s) know if you or your partner has traveled to an affected country that has mosquito-borne illnesses such as Dengue, Zika or Chikungunya. Of these diseases, Zika can be transmitted sexually and is of concern to pregnant women since Zika can cause birth defects so pregnant women or partners who return from affected countries should either abstain from sex or use protection for two to six months depending on gender or symptoms.

How and when is spraying done?

Spraying will be done by way of backpack blowers worn by County staff. This allows for targeted application of the chemical. The spraying will be done during daylight hours when this type of mosquito is most active. Spraying will not be done if it is windy or raining. Spraying events may need to occur multiple times to effectively reduce the adult mosquito populations.

What chemicals might be used?

- Pyrenone 25-5 Public Health (EPA registration no.: 432-1050)
- Scourge Insecticide with Resmethrin/Piperonyl Butoxide 4%+12% MF Formula II (EPA registration no.: 432-716)
- Demand CS Insecticide with Lambda-cyhalothrin1 9.7% (CAS No. 91465-08-6) (EPA Reg. No. 100-1066)

These chemicals are all approved by the EPA for killing adult mosquitoes. Pesticide products that land on surfaces as part of a mosquito control program (e.g., grass, outdoor toys and furniture, etc.) degrade quickly, particularly once exposed to sunlight.

What are the benefits of ULV sprays?
ULV sprays work very quickly to reduce adult mosquito numbers. They kill adult mosquitoes on contact. This can often provide immediate relief from mosquito infestations and stop the spread of disease.

What is my risk of exposure with spraying?
The risks to the public and the environment are very low. Mosquito insecticides are applied as ultra-low volume (ULV) sprays that create a fine mist. ULV insecticide applications involve small quantities of active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, about 3 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risk to people, pets, and the environment.

What kinds of precautions should I take when ULV application is scheduled for my street?
You can reduce your exposure to the insecticide by staying indoors during spraying. The droplets will dissolve after about 20 minutes.
Other things that you can do to reduce exposure are:

- Keep windows closed and fans off. Shut off air conditioners unless they have a setting for re-circulating indoor air. If it is very hot weather, make sure you open the windows and/or turn fans and air conditioners back on about 1 hour after the treatment.
- Rinse homegrown fruits and vegetables with water as you would typically do before cooking or eating them. Wipe down or cover outdoor items such as toys and cover barbeque grills.
- Keep pets indoors during ULV spraying.
- Cover ornamental fishponds to avoid direct exposure.
- If skin and/or clothes or other items are exposed to the ULV insecticide, wash with soap and water.
- If the mist gets in your eyes, immediately rinse them with cool, clean water for 15 minutes, and call your health care provider.
- Do not allow children to play in areas that are still wet from insecticide spraying, wait at least an hour.

Should I be concerned about covering the swimming pool in my yard?
All types of pesticides used in spraying operations for adult mosquito control break down quickly in sunlight and water. Therefore, no special precautions or waiting periods are recommended for outdoor swimming pools. However, if a pool is not being used during the summer months (e.g. if it not being chlorinated or filtered), it should be covered or drained. Any standing body of water is a potential breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Will ultra-low volume (ULV) insecticides hurt the paint on my car?
No. Adult mosquito insecticides are applied as ultra-low volume (ULV) sprays. ULV insecticide applications involve small quantities of active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, typically less than 3 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risk to people, pets, and the environment, including the paint on your car. For more information, refer to the EPA's website at:
https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/ppls/000432-01050-20130509.pdf

Where can I get more information?
For more information about mosquito control please call the County of San Diego Vector Control Program at (858) 694-2888 or email us at: vector@sdcounty.ca.gov. Please visit our website at www.SDFightTheBite.com for more Frequently Asked Questions and announcements about ULV insecticide treatments and the areas where it will occur.