

MOSQUITO-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS



Culex tarsalis - The Encephalitis Mosquito

WHAT IS MOSQUITO-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS?

Mosquito-borne encephalitis is a viral disease which is transmitted by mosquitoes. The mosquitoes take blood meals from wild and peridomestic birds, pick up the virus, bite man, and transmit the disease to man.

In Orange County, we are primarily concerned with three types of encephalitis:

1. St. Louis Encephalitis.
2. Western Equine Encephalitis.
3. West Nile Virus

These three types of diseases are transmitted by two different species of mosquitoes commonly found in Orange County:

1. *Culex quinquefasciatus* - Southern house mosquito.
2. *Culex tarsalis* - Western encephalitis mosquito.

WHERE DO THESE MOSQUITOES BREED?

1. Backyard water from local irrigation are common breeding sources.

2. In Orange County, breeding sites may include the San Joaquin Marsh and Newport Back Bay areas where many species of migratory and resident birds appear.

There are at least two major bird species that are reservoirs (carriers) of the encephalitis virus:

1. House sparrow.
2. House finch.

Symptoms of the encephalitis virus include:

1. Flu-like symptoms.
2. Fever, headache, and exhaustion.
3. Severe cases can lead to coma, inflammation of the brain and spinal cord, and even death.

Mosquito bite prevention:

1. Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts.
2. Use mosquito repellents.
3. Stay indoors at dusk.
4. Repair torn window screens.



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