

City of Cortland Mosquito Control

Mosquito-borne diseases affect millions of people worldwide each year. In the United States, some species of mosquitoes can transmit diseases such as West Nile Virus, encephalitis, dengue fever, and malaria to humans, and a variety of diseases to wildlife and domestic animals. To combat mosquitoes and the public health hazards they present, the City has established a mosquito control program. Throughout the summer, the city fogs the residential areas with an adulticide that kills the mosquitoes it comes into contact with.

Mosquito adulticides are applied as ultra-low volume (ULV) sprays. ULV sprayers dispense very fine aerosol droplets that stay aloft and kill flying mosquitoes on contact. ULV applications involve small quantities of pesticide active ingredient in relation to the size of the area treated, typically less than 3 ounces per acre, which minimizes exposure and risks to people and the environment.

Should I Take Steps to Reduce Exposure to Pesticides During Mosquito Control Spraying?

Generally, there is no need to relocate during mosquito control spraying. The pesticides have been evaluated for this use and found to pose minimal risks to human health and the environment when used according to label directions. For example, EPA has estimated the exposure and risks to both adults and children posed by ULV aerial and ground applications of the insecticides malathion and naled. For all the exposure scenarios considered, exposures ranged from 100 to 10,000 times below an amount of pesticide that might pose a health concern. These estimates assumed several spraying events over a period of weeks, and also assumed that a toddler would ingest some soil and grass in addition to dermal exposure. Other mosquito control pesticides pose similarly low risks. (For more details on health and environmental risk considerations, see the separate EPA fact sheets on the specific mosquito control pesticides.)

Although mosquito control pesticides pose low risks, some people may prefer to avoid or further minimize exposure. Some common sense steps to help reduce possible exposure to pesticides include:

- Pay attention to the local media for announcements about spraying and remain indoors during applications in the immediate area.
- People who suffer from chemical sensitivities or feel spraying may aggravate a preexisting health condition, may consult their physician or local health department and take special measures to avoid exposure.
- Close windows and turn off window-unit air conditioners when spraying is taking place in the immediate area.
- Do not let children play near or behind truck-mounted applicators when they are in use.

What Can I Do to Reduce the Number of Mosquitoes in and Around My Home?

The most important step is to eliminate potential breeding habitats for mosquitoes. Get rid of any standing water around the home, including water in potted plant dishes, garbage cans, old tires, gutters, ditches, wheelbarrows, bird baths, hollow trees, and wading pools. Any standing water should be drained, including abandoned or unused swimming pools. Mosquitoes can breed in any puddle that lasts more than 4 days. Make sure windows and screen doors are "bug tight." Replace outdoor lights with yellow "bug" lights. Wear headnets, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants if venturing into areas with high mosquito populations, such as salt marshes or wooded areas. Use mosquito repellents when necessary, always following label instructions.

How Does EPA Ensure the Safest Possible Use of Pesticides?

EPA must evaluate and register pesticides before they may be sold, distributed, or used in the United States. The Agency is also in the process of reassessing, and reregistering when appropriate, all older pesticides (those registered prior to 1984) to ensure that they meet current scientific standards. To evaluate a pesticide for either registration or re-registration, EPA assesses a wide variety of potential human health and environmental effects associated with use of the product. The producer of the pesticide must provide data from tests done according to EPA guidelines. These tests determine whether a pesticide has the potential to cause adverse effects on humans, wildlife, fish, and plants, including endangered species and non-target organisms. Other tests help to assess the risks of contaminating surface water or ground water from leaching, runoff, or spray drift. If a pesticide meets EPA requirements, the pesticide is approved for use in accordance with label directions. **However, no pesticide is 100 percent safe and care must be exercised in the use of any pesticide.**

Where Can I Get More Information?

For more information contact City Hall at 330 637-3916. A schedule of spraying and material safety data sheet of the spray chemical can be obtained. The mosquito spraying schedule is also available on line at the City's website www.cityofcortland.org on the Community Bulletin Board. Other resources for information on public health, disease control, and mosquito control include the following:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Tel: 970-221-6400

Fax: 970-221-6476

E-mail: dvbid@cdc.gov

Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov>

National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)

Tel: 1-800-858-7378

E-mail: npic@ace.orst.edu

Web site: <http://npic.orst.edu/>

West Nile Virus Resource Guide: <http://npic.orst.edu/wnv/>

American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA)

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