



# Media Release

18 October 2019

## Residents urged to be mindful of mosquitoes

Residents are advised to be mindful of mosquitoes as the weather warms up due to the risk of contracting Ross River Virus (RRV) or Barmah Forest Virus (BFV).

There were 18 cases of Ross River virus reported in the City of Cockburn in the last financial year, and a similar mild season is expected this year.

The City uses a combination of mosquito surveillance, education, source reduction, larval control and promotion of personal protection measures to minimise the risk of mosquito bites.

Part of Cockburn surrounding Thomsons Lake has a higher potential risk of RRV exposure, meaning the area experiences problems with nuisance and disease-carrying mosquitoes most years.

City of Cockburn Environmental Health Manager Nick Jones said the City's Health Service does not put chemicals in any lakes or natural ecosystems in order to preserve the Beeliar Regional Park's 19 wetlands, some of which are listed as a *Wetlands of International Importance* under the Ramsar convention to protect migratory bird habitat.

"The City treats drainage structures with larvicide to kill mosquito larvae before they emerge as adults and have the potential to bite people and pass on viruses," Mr Jones said.

### What can I do to protect myself and stop mosquitoes breeding around my home?

- Reduce outdoor activities during high mosquito activity periods (dawn and dusk)
- Cover up by wearing light-coloured long-sleeve shirts and long pants that are loose fitting
- Apply personal insect repellent containing diethyltoluamide (DEET) or Picaridin, evenly to all areas of exposed skin. Always apply repellent according to the label instructions.
- Repellents for children over 12 months can contain up to 10 per cent DEET or picaridin, and should first be applied to the hands of the carer then spread evenly to



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the exposed skin of the child without applying repellent to the hands, or near the eyes or mouth of the child.

- To protect children, consider staying indoors, using pram netting or dressing them in loose, long-sleeved clothing, socks and shoes.
- Ensure fly screens to doors and windows are fitted and maintained
- Check your property for potential breeding sources:
  - Empty pot plant bases weekly or fill the base with sand to absorb water;
  - Bromeliads and other water holding plants should be washed out weekly;
  - Clean roof gutters out regularly and trim back trees which can block gutters;
  - Ensure rainwater tanks are screened;
  - Keep swimming pools maintained;
  - Ensure plumbing and vents to septic tanks are screened;
  - Birdbaths and ornamental pools should be washed out weekly.

For more information visit [www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/mosquitoes](http://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/mosquitoes) or learn more Fight the Bite tips at [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Fightthebite](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Fightthebite)

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