

Mosquitoes: More Than a Nuisance

(NAPSA)—As the cold weather slowly escapes, we find ourselves looking for more reasons to bask and play outdoors. But be advised: spending time outdoors may come with mosquito-related risks.

Mosquitoes inevitably accompany warm weather and are much more than just a nuisance during outings and picnics. Though typically feared for the dangers they pose internationally where they carry and transmit the infectious agents that cause malaria, lymphatic filariasis, yellow fever and dengue fever, mosquitoes should not be taken for granted in North America. Approximately 200 of the more than 3,000 mosquito species worldwide are found in North America, and some are capable of transmitting a number of viruses causing encephalitis (swelling of the brain), including West Nile virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16,000 people in the United States have become ill with West Nile virus since it was first identified in New York in 1999. Serious symptoms resulting from West Nile virus can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness or paralysis, and the disease can even be fatal.

“Mosquitoes only need a small amount of water with nutrients to breed and survive, making them very hard to control,” says Frank Meek, Technical Director for Orkin, Inc. “It is important to take prevention measures seriously to reduce populations and the accompanying risk of diseases.”

Most cases of mosquito-related disease show up in late summer or early fall when populations are largely prevalent. Fortunately, a



Take preventative measures to protect yourself from mosquito-borne diseases. (photo courtesy of CDC)

few preventative measures will allow you and your family to continue to enjoy the pleasures of the changing weather:

- When outdoors, spray an EPA-approved insect repellent on exposed skin and over clothing.
- During prime mosquito biting hours of dusk to dawn, wear long sleeves and pants in addition to repellent, or consider staying indoors.
- Make sure screens on windows and doors fit tightly and have no holes.
- Eliminate breeding sites by emptying standing water from objects around the home, including flower pots, buckets, tire swings and children's wading pools when not in use. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly.

In addition to these preventative measures, professional help is also available through Orkin, the only national pest control provider offering mosquito control and treatment services.

For more information on how to prevent mosquitoes, or for a free inspection, visit www.orkin.com or call 1-800-800-ORKIN. To learn more about mosquito-related diseases, visit www.cdc.gov.