



As Summer Travel Season Heats Up The Threat of Local Dengue Transmission in California Continues

National Mosquito Control Awareness Week, observed June 15-22, 2025, educates residents about mosquitoes and how to prevent the spread of mosquito-transmitted diseases

SACRAMENTO, June 11, 2025 — [Dengue cases are on the rise around the world](#) and California's recent local cases are a reflection of that. In 2024, there were a record number of returning travelers diagnosed with dengue, which led to 18 reported locally acquired dengue infections in southern California. When a traveler gets infected with dengue and returns home, [invasive Aedes mosquitoes](#) can get infected by biting the traveler. Then the infected mosquito can spread the virus to other people through bites. Locally acquired cases means that local *Aedes* mosquitoes have been infected with dengue and have spread it to people in the community.

[Invasive Aedes mosquitoes continue to spread throughout California](#) and are now established in 25 counties across the state. That number is expected to grow as invasive mosquitoes are difficult to control and need very little water to survive and reproduce. The [CDC recommends](#) using an EPA-registered repellent and preventing mosquito bites not only while traveling to an area with dengue, but also for three weeks after returning home. This helps prevent spreading the virus to others if you are in an area where mosquitoes are active.

“Unfortunately, there is not one silver bullet to prevent the spread of dengue,” said Stephen Abshier, president of the [MVCAC](#). “That’s why a growing number of mosquito and vector control districts in California are turning to innovative technologies to help curb the spread of invasive mosquitoes and prevent local transmission of this debilitating disease.”

Some mosquito control districts are using [x-rays](#) to sterilize male mosquitoes, which do not bite or spread disease, and then release the sterilized mosquitoes into a specific area to mate with wild female mosquitoes. The resulting eggs do not produce mosquito offspring, therefore reducing the mosquito population in the immediate vicinity.

Other districts are using [Wolbachia](#), a bacteria naturally found in about 60% of insects around the world. Male *Aedes* mosquitoes are raised in a lab with a specific type of *Wolbachia* they don’t normally have and then they are released to mate with wild female *Aedes* mosquitoes that have a different type of *Wolbachia* or none at all and the resulting eggs don’t hatch.

Pilot programs using x-rays and *Wolbachia* to sterilize male mosquitoes have been successful in decreasing local populations of disease-spreading mosquitoes and may be replicated at a larger scale in the future. One of the biggest barriers to implementation is cost because innovative

technologies can be very expensive. These technologies do not replace traditional control methods and are used as part of an Integrated Vector Management program.

In addition to threats of locally-acquired dengue transmission in parts of the state, the most prevalent and serious mosquito-borne disease in California continues to be West Nile virus, which is transmitted by *Culex* mosquitoes. As California and other states throughout the nation continue to battle these risks, it is critical that there is continued federal investment in scientific research, disease surveillance, and vector control initiatives.

Everyone can do their part to help prevent mosquito bites and keep their home and yards mosquito free:

- Install and maintain screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including in flowerpots, old tires, buckets, pet dishes, and trash cans. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in very small amounts of standing water.
- Repair leaking faucets and broken sprinklers that can contribute to standing water around your home.
- Clean rain gutters clogged with leaves.
- Apply insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535, to clothes and exposed skin according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. It is important to follow product label instructions for the safe use of repellents on children and to apply repellent after putting on sunscreen.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants, especially if outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes that can spread West Nile virus are most active.
- Report neglected swimming pools and day-biting mosquitoes to your local mosquito and vector control agency (agency information can be found at www.mvcac.org)

To learn more, please visit MVCAC or the California Department of Public Health.

About MVCAC

The Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC) is the statewide voice for mosquito and vector control professionals. The association provides public health information, expertise, mosquito and vector-borne disease surveillance, innovative research, professional training, effective legislative and regulatory advocacy on behalf of California public agencies.

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