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NEWS RELEASE

Zika Prevention Season Begins in El Paso

Residents urged to "Fight the Bite, Day and Night"

EL PASO, Texas – Now that spring has arrived and many people are watering their yards, the Public Health Department reminds residents to be mindful of mosquitoes.

As temperatures start to climb, the department urges residents to prevent mosquito breeding, mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases that can have a devastating impact on the community.

"We have lived with West Nile virus making the rounds in El Paso for many years," said Public Health Director Robert Resendes. "Now we're also trying to prevent locally-acquired cases of the Zika virus which can lead to severe birth defects and even lead to still births. That is why pregnant women are encouraged to avoid all mosquito bites and to inform their healthcare provider if they have any of the symptoms associated with Zika such as fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes)."

While El Paso has not had any cases of Zika virus, there have been three imported cases of Zika going back to 2016. Although the mosquitoes that are associated with Zika are different from those that transmit West Nile virus, both types of mosquitoes exist in El Paso County. Fortunately, many of the mosquito prevention measures are the same for all mosquitoes.

- DEET - Use insect repellents that contain DEET when outdoors.
- DRESS - Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors.
- DUSK and DAWN – Although mosquitoes associated with Zika can be active throughout the day, residents should take extra care during peak mosquito biting hours (from dusk to dawn) or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.
- DRAIN – Drain standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, and birdbaths.

Residents can also mosquito-proof their home by repairing screens on windows and doors in order to keep out mosquitoes. If you know of an area where ponding and/or mosquito breeding is taking place, you can call vector control by dialing 3-1-1.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for mosquito bite prevention tips by searching EP Public Health and visit the City of El Paso YouTube channel for a story on Zika season in the latest Your City in 5 segment.

For more information on the Public Health Department, call 2-1-1 or visit www.EPHealth.com or www.EPSalud.com.

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