



The Risk Connection

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2016

Presented by Risk Management & Employee Benefits

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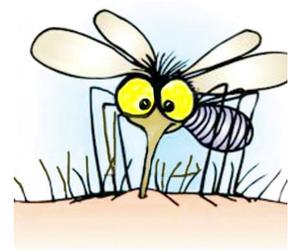
Zika Virus Information

With the weather beginning to rapidly warm up, mosquito season will soon be upon us. Aside from the often mildly irritating bites that mosquitoes can deliver or the West Nile Virus as previously reported on, this warm season may carry with it a more significant danger.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently declared the Zika virus an international public concern. Zika virus is usually transmitted through the bite from a mosquito that has been found in areas of California, though there are other ways in which the virus may be spread. The primary issue with the Zika virus is its link to a condition called microcephaly, “a condition that causes babies to be born with unusually small heads and, in the vast majority of cases, damaged brains.”

There is no vaccination available for the disease and only one in five people infected with the virus show symptoms. Common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes, muscle pain, and headache. As of now, no local mosquito-borne Zika virus cases have been reported in the US, though several cases have been reported by international travelers. This is however, no reason to let one’s guard down.

There are a number of measures that may be taken to help protect against mosquito-borne illnesses locally. One of the most effective and easiest measures is the use of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellent. When properly used, insect repellents have been proven to be safe and effective, even for women who are or may become pregnant. Addi-



tionally, the State Public Health Officer has urged travelers to take extra precautions, particularly if traveling to Mexico or Latin America. Finally, avoid allowing standing water to accumulate around your home where mosquitoes may be able to find ideal breeding grounds.

**Information contained in this article and additional information may be found with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, the Fresno County Department of Public Health, as well as the Fresno Mosquito & Vector Control District.

Personnel Services Department

Risk Management

County Plaza 16th Floor

559-600-1850 Stop 188

Employee Benefits

County Plaza 14th Floor

559-600-1810 Stop 188

Safety Class Schedule

Workplace Violence

4/20/16 9:00-11:00 AM

Hazard Communication

4/6/16 9:00-10:30 AM

Office Ergonomics

3/9/16 9:00-10:30 AM

4/14/16 9:00-10:30 AM

5/26/16 9:00-10:30 AM

Back Safety

3/23/16 9:00-10:00 AM

5/17/16 9:00-10:00 AM

Office Safety

3/24/16 9:00-10:30 AM

5/3/16 9:00-10:30 AM

CPR and First Aid

3/17/16 8:30-3:30 PM

4/8/16 8:30-3:30 PM

4/21/16 8:30-3:30 PM

5/20/16 8:30-3:30 PM

Spaces for these classes may be reserved by emailing the Personnel-Training mailbox. All courses are free. See the Training Schedule on Personnel's Risk Management website for more information.

SMOKING REMINDERS

Most County employees are already aware of some of the rules in place regarding smoking. The obvious one is that smoking is not allowed inside any of the County buildings, but, what about other situations? There are a few things to keep in mind when it comes to smoking, so here are some reminders on County policies. Included in the definition of County buildings are County parking garages. Just like a regular County building, smoking is prohibited inside, even if the garage is not completely enclosed. Smoking in any County vehicle is prohibited. That goes for passengers and drivers, even if you're the only one in the vehicle. People also need to give themselves plenty of room when they are smoking outside. According to the Government Code, smoking must be at least 20 feet away from any exit, entrance or any "operable window."



Another issue that is beginning to come up frequently is electronic cigarettes. The County Safety Rules now define smoking to include electronic cigarettes as well as regular tobacco cigarettes. With that included in the definition, every rule regarding smoking also covers "vaping," or e-cigarettes, as well.

Remember to be courteous to fellow County employees. We all share the space, so let's make it a safe and comfortable place for everyone!

Take Control of Your Allergies

Understand and Manage Your Symptoms



Allergy signs and treatments

Watery eyes, itchiness, runny nose. Sound familiar? If it does, you might have allergies. An allergic reaction is when your immune system has a bad response to something. Normally your immune system protects your body from getting sick because of things like bacteria and viruses. It also helps protect you against allergens, the things that set off an allergic reaction. When it doesn't do that job, it's like having a very sensitive alarm system — it alerts your body to things that really shouldn't cause a reaction.

What causes allergies?

A lot of people have allergies. Your genes and the environment can play a role in that. If both of your parents have allergies, you'll probably have allergies. But you may not be allergic to the same things or have the same reactions.

Common allergy triggers are:

Dust	Food	Insect Bites	Jewelry	Makeup
Medicines	Mold	Pet Dander	Pollen	Spices

Signs

Allergy symptoms can be different from one person to the next. But here are some common signs:

- Breathing problems or wheezing
- Coughing
- Headache
- Itchy nose, mouth, throat, skin, etc.
- Burning, tearing, itchy, red or swollen eyes
- Diarrhea, stomach cramps or throwing up
- Hives or skin rash
- Runny nose

What can you do?

If you think you have an allergy, tell your doctor. Here are some ways to test for an allergy:

- Skin test
- Blood test or complete blood count
- Use or elimination tests: using certain things to see if you get worse or avoiding certain things to see if you get better

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The best way to reduce your symptoms is to try to avoid the things that cause your allergies. Sometimes, that's not so easy to do. It might be easy to stay away from certain foods or medicines. But if your allergy trigger comes from the air around you, it can be hard to avoid.

Allergies can't be cured, but there are ways to treat and relieve your symptoms. Treatment will depend on the kind of allergy you have and how bad it is. Medicines or allergy shots may help. But you may need to get shots for years before they work. And they don't always work for everyone. Severe allergic reactions, called anaphylaxis, need to be treated with a medicine called epinephrine. It can save a person's life if it's taken immediately after a severe allergic reaction.



Tips to Allergy-Proof Your Environment

Windows: Keep them closed and use air conditioning if you're allergic to pollen.

Temperature: Dust mites and mold love hot, humid houses. So keep the temperature in your home at 70°. And keep the humidity under 50% to prevent mold from growing.

Bed and bedding: Wash your sheets, pillowcases and blankets at least once a week in hot water. Use covers for pillows, mattresses and box springs to help against dust mites.

Floors: If you can, get hardwood or linoleum floors instead of carpet. Make sure any rugs are washable to help control dust and mold. Vacuum at least once a week.

Smoking: Don't let anyone smoke in your home. Avoid cigarette smoke when you go out.

Cleaning: Wear a painter's mask when you vacuum or clean, work in the garden or mow the lawn.

Food: Always check the labels of what you're eating or drinking to make sure they don't have anything you're allergic to.

Medicines: If you have a drug allergy, you need to avoid taking the drug and others like it. Think about wearing a medical alert bracelet, in case you have an emergency.

-Courtesy of Anthem