

21 February 2019

Mosquito trapping identifies Ross River virus

South western Sydney residents living around or visiting the Georges River area are being reminded to protect themselves against mosquito bites after mosquito trapping at Deepwater Park identified mosquitoes with Ross River virus.

This is particularly important for people enjoying outdoor activities such as camping or fishing in areas with high mosquito numbers.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Acting Public Health Director Dr Nick Rose said while Ross River infection was relatively rare in south western Sydney, recent high numbers of mosquitoes around the Georges River means people need to be more cautious.

“There is no treatment for Ross River. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid getting bitten,” he said.

Symptoms can include tiredness, rash, fever and sore and swollen joints, typically within three weeks of being bitten. They can subside after several days but some people may experience them for weeks or even months.

“People should see their doctor if they experience these symptoms,” Dr Rose said.

“The Public Health Unit continues to monitor notified cases of Ross River and other mosquito-borne virus infections.

“This determines the number of cases and whether the infection was acquired locally or elsewhere.”

Simple steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes include:

- Avoid being outside, unprotected, when mosquitoes are commonly active at dawn and dusk. Cover up as much as possible with light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing and covered footwear.
- Apply mosquito repellent regularly to exposed areas. Repellents containing Diethyl Toluamide (DEET) or Picaridin are best.
- Don't use repellents on the skin of children under the age of three months. Instead use physical barriers such as netting on prams, cots and play areas for babies.
- Eradicate mosquito breeding sites around the home, including containers that hold water.
- Use flyscreens on windows and doors of houses and keep them in good order.
- When camping, use flyscreens, or sleep under mosquito nets.

For more information, visit health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/factsheets/Pages/Ross-River-Fever.aspx