

Wednesday, 31 March 2010

ROSS RIVER VIRUS FOUND IN LOCAL MOSQUITOES

City of Ryde Council is working with NSW Health and other relevant authorities to determine what measures need to be taken following the discovery of the Ross River Fever virus from a single mosquito sample from a trapping in Lambert Park on 24 March.

The sample was identified as part of the City of Ryde's involvement in the NSW Arbovirus Surveillance & Vector Monitoring program. This program traps and analyses adult mosquitoes across NSW including metropolitan Sydney.

The City of Ryde is one of a handful of metropolitan Councils that has actively participated in the program for the past 16 years.

The City of Ryde Council undertakes local mosquito monitoring activities and runs a community education program related to mosquitoes.

The Northern Sydney Central Coast Health Service has advised that there have been no notifications of locally acquired Ross River Fever cases among City of Ryde residents in the last five years.

There are usually around 1000 notifications of Human Ross River Fever cases per year across NSW with the highest numbers occurring around March/April each year. The vast majority of cases are acquired when people are bitten outside metropolitan areas.

As a precaution anyone with persistent flu-like symptoms or joint pains, and who has been bitten by mosquitoes should see their doctor and be tested for the virus.

In humans, Ross River infections can cause a flu-like illness, with fever, chills, aches and pains in the muscles and joints and, sometimes, fatigue, swelling of joints and a rash.

The important actions people can take to prevent getting bitten include:

- Protecting your skin from bites by covering up with loose fitting, light coloured clothing with long sleeves, pants and socks.
- Using insect repellents on any exposed skin. The most effective repellents contain the ingredients DEET or Picaridin.
- Ensuring that all doors and windows are fitted with flyscreens.

- When camping or on holidays, making sure your accommodation, including your tent, has flyscreening in good condition.

It is also important to minimise the chances of mosquitoes breeding around the home by:

- Removing all rubbish holding stagnant water from around the yard
- Regularly flushing out pot-plant bases
- Keeping guttering clear
- Mowing lawns regularly and clear any areas of moist, tangled undergrowth
- Making sure openings of septic tanks and water tanks are covered and screened securely.

For more information contact:

Health advice

NSW Health Website www.health/nsw.gov.au

or

call the Northern Sydney Central Coast Public Health Unit on (02) 9477 9400.

Mosquito management

City of Ryde Website www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/services/animals/mosquitoes