

25 February 2022

Mosquito warning for Georges River and Bayside residents

Residents and visitors near the Georges River and Bayside areas are being advised to take extra precautions to protect themselves against the mosquito-borne disease Ross River virus.

The virus has been found in mosquitoes at Picnic Point, a suburb north of the Georges River, on two occasions in the past month.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's Public Health Director, Dr Vicky Sheppard, said while there have been no locally-acquired cases confirmed to date, people can take precautions to reduce the risk of this infection.

"There is no specific treatment for this virus which can affect people for months, so the best way to avoid infection is to avoid being bitten," Dr Sheppard said.

Ross River virus is spread by mosquitoes that feed on infected animals and then bite people. Symptoms can develop about a week after a mosquito bite, and include fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pains. Joints may be swollen and sometimes a rash appears. Panadol and ibuprofen can be used to manage symptoms.

"Please see your GP to organise a blood test if you are concerned about your symptoms," Dr Sheppard said.

Simple actions to avoid mosquito bites include:

- When outside cover up as much as possible with light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing and covered footwear.
- Use an effective insect repellent on exposed skin. Re-apply repellent within a few hours, as protection wears off with perspiration. The best mosquito repellents contain Diethyl Toluamide (DEET), Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Use insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units (indoors) and mosquito coils (outdoors) to clear rooms or repel mosquitoes from an area.
- Cover all windows, doors, vents and other entrances with insect screens.
- Remove any water-holding containers outside the house where mosquitoes could breed.

For local data on notifications in South Eastern Sydney residents with Ross River virus go to: <https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/directory/public-health/public-health-data-and-research> and click on 'Arbovirus Surveillance Report.'

The Public Health Unit also provides public information on its Facebook and Twitter page.

For a copy of the NSW Health fact sheets on Ross River virus go to:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Ross-River-Fever.aspx>