

## **CONCERNS OVER THE SPRAYING OF PESTICIDES FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY**

If you are concerned about our local government deciding to have your private property and public land and places (which may include your homes, daycare centers, schools, playgrounds, hospitals, parks, rivers and streams, etc.) sprayed with toxic adulticide pesticides for mosquitoes because of West Nile Virus (WNV) or other mosquito borne viruses found in Washtenaw County; please consider the following reasons why you don't want to be sprayed, and why you should contact your local government officials to voice your opposition immediately after reading this article.

For most humans, West Nile Virus (WNV) is still a low risk disease (more people die from the flu than WNV). Most people who get WNV are not even aware of being infected, and they will develop immunity for future infections. Less than 1 in 100 people bitten by an infected mosquito will develop serious forms of illness (encephalitis). Less than 10% of the 1% of those who develop encephalitis are at risk for severe or fatal infection. These are very low numbers. However, those at risk from WNV (the immune compromised and elderly) will be at a possible greater risk along with the general population (including unborn babies and children) for potential serious adverse health effects from widespread pesticide spraying. Evidence suggests that you and your children are statistically more likely to have an adverse reaction to the spraying of pesticides than contracting WNV.

Not using pesticides is considered a preventive measure in managing mosquito populations and preventing West Nile Virus cases according to new suggested evidence. Pesticide use may result in increases in infected mosquito numbers. Experts believe that pesticide induced immune suppression in all living things makes mosquitoes, birds, and humans far more vulnerable to viral infections. New studies show that pesticides actually weakens the blood brain barrier in humans. Another study shows that as far as West Nile Virus is concerned; it can only affect you dangerously if it crosses the blood brain barrier. Therefore, it is those individuals with weakened blood brain barriers who will most likely contract the serious manifestations of WNV (encephalitis, meningitis). This sets up a Catch-22 situation. If you spray pesticides; it will weaken blood brain barriers thereby setting up more potential victims to contract the serious forms of WNV or possibly other viral infections. There are other studies to show that the mosquitoes that are sprayed also develop weakened immune systems thereby becoming better vectors for transmitting WNV. If adulticide pesticides are used or continue to be used as a primary defense against WNV, some experts believe the virus will mutate into a stronger form as a defense mechanism against the pesticides; which could make the virus become more dangerous than the flu.

The pesticides commonly used for mosquitoes have serious health risks attached to them. The pesticides generally used are: Synthetic Pyrethroids (nerve poisons), which include Permethrin, Resmethrin (Scourge), and Sumithrin (Avid); Malathion (an organophosphate); and Piperonyl Butoxide (Anvil 2+2). Pyrethroids (which are neurotoxic) are associated with a broad array of human health impacts. Recent evidence shows that breast cancer cells proliferate at accelerated rates when exposed to pyrethroids. Human health effects may be most severe for developing unborn babies & young children; and include endocrine disruption, immune system suppression and nervous system effects. This doesn't even begin to address the "inert" ingredients (any ingredient in a pesticide formulation other than the active ingredient including carriers, emulsifiers, and synergists). These products can be far more dangerous than the base ingredients themselves.

The issue of pesticide "drift" (the airborne movement of a pesticide during or immediately after its application to a site not intended for its use) is also a real concern. Pesticide drift will enter your homes, schools, and workplaces and persist for days, weeks, months and even years.

