MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

February 2025

While most mosquitoes are just annoying, some can also carry disease and induce life threatening illnesses. Mosquito-borne diseases are transmitted by mosquito bites. Warm and wet weather can mean increased numbers and more bites. Floods in particular create a perfect environmental recipe for breeding.

Information for health professionals: Mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria and Southern NSW	**Barmah Forest Virus** • Barmah Forest virus disease (health.vic.gov.au) • Barmah Forest virus infection - Better Health Channel **Ross River Virus** • Ross River virus disease (health.vic.gov.au) • Ross River virus infection - Better Health Channel **Japanese Encephalitis** • Japanese encephalitis virus (health.vic.gov.au) • Japanese encephalitis - Better Health Channel **Murray Valley Encephalitis** • Murray Valley encephalitis (health.vic.gov.au) • Murray Valley encephalitis - Better Health Channel **West Nile/Kunjin Virus** • West Nile virus and Kunjin virus disease (health.vic.gov.au) • West Nile virus - Better Health Channel **Dengue Virus** • Dengue virus disease (health.vic.gov.au) • Dengue virus disease - Better Health Channel
Notifiable infectious diseases	Notification of an infectious disease or medical condition applies to medical practitioners and/or pathology services. Notification requirements vary depending on the severity of the infectious diseases. The link below contains information regarding the notification process for infectious diseases including mosquito-borne diseases. • Notifiable infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms
Bite prevention	Simple actions prevent mosquito bites and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne diseases and these include: • limiting time outside at dusk and in the evening when mosquitoes are likely to be out • wear mosquito repellent containing picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin. For kids and babies, apply repellent to their clothes rather than their skin • cover up by wearing long loose-fitting clothing

	use 'knockdown' insect spray, mosquito coils or plug-in repellent when outdoors. Mosquito proof your home: • remove stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed • make sure your home is mosquito proof by installing insect screens. • on holidays, make sure your accommodation is fitted with mosquito netting or screens.
What is being done to manage mosquitoes	Local councils are undertaking routine prevention activities in areas known to be favourable for mosquito breeding. When a particular species of mosquito that spreads disease are found in very high numbers, or a virus is detected in mosquitoes, additional mosquito control measures are implemented by government agencies to protect the impacted communities. In Victoria, the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 outline responsibilities for mosquito management. The Department of Health manage a state-wide program to reduce the impact of disease transmitted by mosquitoes. This program funds: • Councils in key areas to undertake weekly mosquito surveillance. Mosquitoes are trapped and then sent to a specialised lab for testing where the results determine the level of risk for that community and guide our recommendations for interventions. • Specialised teams which can be deployed to areas where diseases like Ross River virus or Japanese Encephalitis virus are circulating and use specific control activities to help reduce the risk to the nearby communities.
Where to find more information	• Mosquito-borne diseases | health.vic.gov.au • Protect yourself from mosquito-borne disease - Better Health Channel • Mosquitoes - protect your home checklist - Better Health Channel
Vaccinations	There are two safe and effective vaccines for JE: • Imojev®: live attenuated vaccine given by subcutaneous injection. Registered for use in people aged ≥9 months. Primary course is one dose. Imojev® vaccine is prioritised in Victoria's current public health response. • JEspect®: inactivated JE vaccine given by intramuscular injection. Available for use in infants and children aged ≥2 months, immunocompromised people, and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Primary course is two doses Providers can order the JE vaccine via the Onelink Online portal http://www.onelinkonline.net Due to limited supply, vaccine order limits may be in place. Orders placed over the set limits could be automatically reduced. If you require additional stock that exceeds current ordering limits, contact the Immunisation Program immunisation@health.vic.gov.au before submitting an order. Providers are advised to monitor Onelink ordering templates for further information. • JE elearning module
Keep up-to-date with HealthPathways information	• Mosquito-borne Diseases in Victoria • Notifiable Conditions in Victoria

Update your emergency response documents	Preferably use the Emergency Response Planning Tool (ERPT) (available to general practices until June 2025) and ensure staff are familiar with it. If using a paper system, store a copy off site. This will not only help you to stay focused and respond under pressure but get your business back up and running more quickly.
Ensure emergency contact details are up-to-date	So that Murray PHN can assist in coordinating support with government agencies during an emergency ensure to let us know who your emergency contacts are via your Quality Improvement Consultant or primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au
Communicate service closures or impacts	Use social media and other platforms. Prepare a message or email to patients using appointment confirmation system or Pen CS if needed. Use Pen CS and CAT Plus recipes to identify relevant patient groups and send an SMS message to those patients who have not opted out. You will need to set up your account and ensure you have enough credits in the system to send the messages. **Inform Murray PHN of service closures or impacts: primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au**
Plan staffing	In the event of no or reduced access to your site or staff absences, consider alternate models of work, alternate sites and equipment needs (ERPT can guide you through these considerations): - Are the practitioners set up with ePrescribing so patients can obtain scripts immediately and remotely? Ensure paper scripts/prescribing pads are also available in the event that no internet is available. - Does the practice have an alternate contact number, or can you temporarily divert your practice number, so patients can call if the building is closed, and the phone system is inaccessible? - Can admin and clinical staff access your practice management and clinical software systems off site to facilitate remote models of care? - Ensure clinicians are able to create pathology and imaging requests if working remotely. Have information available for VVED to share with patients.
Protect your data	Ensure that your practice software is backed up, ideally to the cloud, to reduce the risk of data loss. Upload patient information to My Health Record
Join the emergency volunteer list	If you have capacity to support in an emergency event, register your interest using the online form.
Do emergency exercise training	Undertake mock training incidents to ensure staff are competent and aware of their roles in the event of an emergency.

Other useful links to share with patients

•My Health Record

• Alternative after hours and emergency care options

Contact us

For more information or support email primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au