



Media Release

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Kunjin Virus Activity in the Shire of Moora

The Shire of Moora is reminding residents and travellers to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites over the coming months.

Kunjin virus has been detected in Moora for the first time since 2017, through the Department of Health's sentinel chicken surveillance program, which provides early warning of virus activity within the environment.

Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Moora, Gavin Robins, said that the timing is unusual, as mosquito and mosquito-borne virus activity is often reduced in the winter months.

"People may not be thinking about protecting themselves from mosquitoes during the winter months. This comes as a timely reminder that there is still a need to be actively preventing mosquito bites.

"Mosquito management is being undertaken by the Shire in areas with a recognised risk of Kunjin virus activity," he said.

"However, it is not realistic to rely on mosquito management programs alone to control all mosquitoes. Individuals living in or travelling in the Shire need to take their own precautions to avoid mosquito bites."

Kunjin virus is transmitted to people and horses through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Most people infected with Kunjin virus do not develop symptoms. In rare cases, the disease can lead to nausea, drowsiness, headache, dizziness, neck stiffness, confusion and seizures. People experiencing these symptoms should seek medical advice urgently.

In young children, fever might be the only early sign of infection. Parents should see their doctor or local health service if concerned. If their child experiences drowsiness, floppiness, irritability, seizures, poor feeding, or general distress they should seek medical attention urgently.

There is currently no specific treatment or vaccine for the virus. The only effective way to prevent infection is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

It is important that residents and travellers to the Moora region take the following simple steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- avoid outdoor exposure, particularly at dawn and early evening.
- wear protective (long, loose-fitting, light-coloured) clothing when outdoors.
- apply an effective personal repellent containing diethyltoluamide (DEET), picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus (PMD/OLE) evenly to all areas of exposed skin and always follow the label instructions.
- ensure insect screens are installed and in good condition on houses and caravans.

- use mosquito nets and mosquito-proof tents if sleeping outside.
- ensure infants and children are adequately protected against mosquito bites, preferably with suitable clothing, shoes/socks, bed nets or other forms of insect screening.

For more information about mosquito prevention visit: <http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-living/Prevent-mosquito-bites>

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