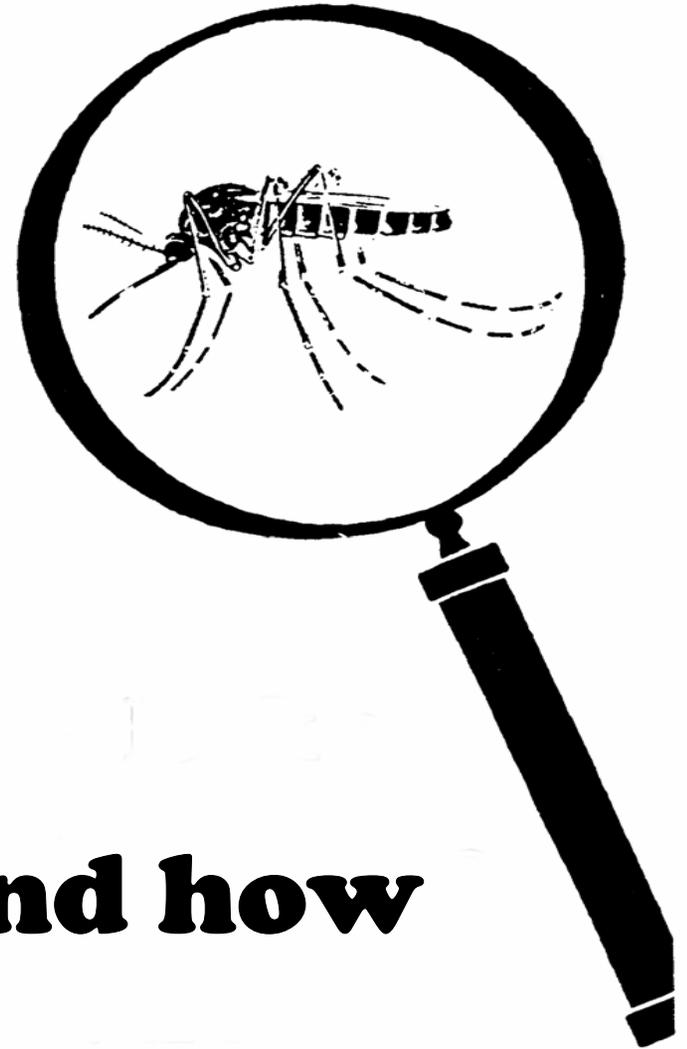


**A look at
La Crosse
Viral
Encephalitis**



**... and how
to control it**

What is La Crosse Encephalitis?

La Crosse viral encephalitis is a severe disease of the central nervous system affecting persons of all ages, but usually children. (Encephalitis means inflammation of the brain.)

The virus, which produces fever, headache, drowsiness, vomiting and, in half of the cases, convulsions, is carried by a certain type of mosquito called *Ochlerotatus triseriatus*. La Crosse viral encephalitis is a very common disease in the United States.

Fortunately, few die of the disease; but because of the severity of the symptoms, good hospital care is required, usually for from seven to ten days. There is no specific drug known to alter the course of the disease, but study has shown us how to prevent it.

The *Ochlerotatus triseriatus* mosquito that spreads the virus breeds in **any object that holds water over a prolonged period**. This includes basal tree holes and **unrimmed tires**. They can also breed in cans, bottles, buckets, and in standing water found on tarps (such as are used to cover woodpiles and open pit silos). *Ochlerotatus triseriatus* will not breed in wetlands, ponds, or ditches.

What You Can Do To Protect Yourself?

1. Fill in basal tree holes temporarily with sand or other coarse soil.
2. Keep old tires under cover where water can't get in them. Do not use tires to hold down tarps or other covers.
3. Don't leave empty cans, bottles, buckets, or other containers lying around where they can collect water.
4. Have your children use mosquito repellent and wear light colored clothing that covers their arms and legs, especially in the late afternoon – the mosquito's peak biting period.
5. If your child develops symptoms of fever, severe headache, vomiting, drowsiness or convulsions, get medical attention immediately.

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Mosquitoes Can be Controlled

The most effective and economical method of reducing adult mosquitoes over a large area is to prevent emergence from as many breeding areas as possible. Adult mosquitoes, once emerged, disperse over large areas; hence, it is easier to control the larvae when they are concentrated in the water.

Source Reduction eliminates artificial breeding sites such as tin cans, tires and tree holes, all of which can breed pest and disease carrying mosquitoes.

While larvae control won't solve the entire problem (adults from outside the controlled area may fly in), it will go a long way toward making it possible to spend evenings out doors devoid of the problem of mosquitoes.

Climatic conditions have much to do with fluctuations of mosquito populations. Extremely dry conditions preclude hatching although given amounts of rainfall will cause broods to come off. Eggs not hatched because of low rainfall are still available for hatching given proper climatic conditions.