

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



Friday, 7 November 2025

PROTECTING VICTORIANS FROM MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

More Victorians will have protection from the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV), with the Allan Labor Government delivering free vaccines to at-risk regional Victorians this mosquito season.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today encouraged Victorians to understand the risks of mosquito-borne diseases and to take simple steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites while enjoying more time outside over the warmer summer months.

Backed by a \$2.3 million investment, the vaccine is now available to people in 24 regional local government areas, primarily inland riverine regions, where there is a higher risk of exposure to the virus.

Most people with JEV infection do not have symptoms or have only mild symptoms such as a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and muscle aches.

However, a small number – around one in every 250 people – can develop severe infection of the brain (encephalitis) or meningitis which can be fatal.

The free JEV vaccine is available for eligible people through GPs, Aboriginal health services, community pharmacies and some local councils.

Simple and practical steps that Victorians can undertake to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, include:

- wearing long, loose and light-coloured clothing when outdoors
- using mosquito repellents that contain active ingredients including Picaridin or DEET
- spraying or rubbing repellent on children's clothes is recommended, avoiding their skin
- limiting time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active such as at dawn and dusk
- removing stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed around the home or a campsite
- making sure windows are fitted with mosquito netting or screens.

The Labor Government's mosquito surveillance program is helping track the presence of diseases in mosquitoes across Victoria, providing an early warning system to protect the public.

The surveillance program helps to monitor the presence of JEV, Murray Valley encephalitis virus, Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus and West Nile virus – informing public health advice so local communities, holidaymakers and livestock managers can be aware of the risks.

More information is available at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/protect-yourself-mosquito-borne-disease.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Mosquitoes can carry serious diseases that pose a real risk to our health – as we head into the warmer months, we would urge all Victorians to take simple precautions to protect themselves and their families."

"We are again making the JEV vaccine available for those Victorians most at risk, keeping communities safe from this preventable mosquito-borne disease."

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High risk local government areas for mosquito-borne diseases and where residents are eligible for the Japanese encephalitis vaccine include:

- Alpine
- Benalla
- Buloke
- Campaspe
- Gannawarra
- Greater Bendigo
- Greater Shepparton
- Hindmarsh
- Horsham
- Indigo
- Loddon
- Macedon Ranges
- Mansfield
- Mildura
- Mitchell
- Moira
- Northern Grampians
- Strathbogie
- Swan Hill
- Towong
- Wangaratta
- West Wimmera
- Wodonga
- Yarriambiack