



# News Release

**GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Catherine Cioffi**  
**Communications Director**  
**Office - (914) 995-2932**  
**Cell- (914) 954 -5579**  
[CCioffi@westchestergov.com](mailto:CCioffi@westchestergov.com)

## **WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS RESIDENTS FREE MINNOWS**

### ***Minnows, Dunks and Education are part of the County's Mosquito Prevention Strategy***

(White Plains, NY) – To help residents keep their backyards free of mosquito breeding sites from now through the fall, the Westchester County Department of Health will give away free minnows to residents for their ponds and water features, along with mosquito dunks, advice and strategies to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus, on Friday, April 28 and Saturday, April 29.

The minnows will be available at the Westchester County Airport, 2 Loop Road, West Harrison, 10604, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Residents who plan to pick up minnows should bring a bucket or pail; minnows will be distributed in watertight plastic bags. To keep the minnows viable, residents should plan to bring them straight home and release them immediately into ponds with at least eight inches of water.

By adding fathead minnows to ornamental ponds that lack fish, residents can reduce the growth of mosquitos in their own backyards. The minnows eat mosquito larvae, preventing them from maturing into biters. They are not needed in ponds that have fish because the fish eat mosquito larvae, too. Dunks serve the same purpose in birdbaths, rain barrels and unused pools.

Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, said: "These hungry minnows can help residents enjoy the outdoors even more as they keep mosquitos from breeding and biting you in your own backyard."

Any resident can help reduce the mosquito population, even without a pond.

"Mosquitoes can lay their eggs in a puddle, a flowerpot saucer or an old tire, so it's extremely helpful to clear your yard and the pavement around your home of buckets, pails and toys that collect standing water and pour out any water that remains after it rains," Amler added.

Large areas of standing water on public property that cannot easily be removed should be reported to the Health Department at (914) 813-5000.

For more information, download the “[Keep Healthy and Bug Off](http://health.westchestergov.com)” brochure at <http://health.westchestergov.com>.

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