With all of the information out there about H1N1 and rabid skunks in our area, it may be easy to forget that we're heading into West Nile virus season. A wet spring coupled with high temperatures creates perfect breeding conditions for mosquitoes. There continue to be no new recommendations concerning West Nile virus, so the five D's: DEET, dusk, dawn, dress and drain are still the best course of action.

—DEET: Make sure you're using an insect repellent product that has been tested and proven effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends insect repellents that contain DEET, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus; all three of these active ingredients have been scientifically proven to provide lasting protection against mosquito bites.

The key to choosing the right insect repellent depends on how much time you'll be spending outdoors. Higher percentages of picaridin and DEET give longer protection from mosquito bites. DEET can be used safely on children over two months of age in concentrations up to 30 percent. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under 3 years of age.

—Dusk and dawn: Dusk and dawn are still peak biting times for mosquitoes. Limit outdoor activity during those hours or make sure you're taking precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

—Dress: If you're outdoors when mosquitoes are biting, cover your arms and legs with long clothing.

—Drain: Remember to drain standing water around your home. As little as one inch of standing water in an old coffee can in the backyard can breed as many as 1,000 mosquitoes every seven days.

Take a hard look around your home and get rid of anything that can collect standing water, or make sure you dump out the standing water at least once a week. This includes bird baths, pet dishes, wheel barrows and flower pots. If you have standing water you can't drain, such as an ornamental pond, consider using mosquito dunks that kill mosquito larvae.

NCHD is no longer testing dead birds for West Nile virus; however, if you see a significant die-off of birds in your area you can report it to the Colorado Help Hotline at 1-877-462-2911.

West Nile virus is preventable, it just takes a little work. If your protective measures fail and you are bitten by a mosquito and experience fever, disorientation, muscle weakness, neck stiffness, headache or nausea, you should consider seeing your medical provider. If your symptoms get worse or you begin to experience any sensory changes such as blurry vision, sensitivity to light or noise, dizziness or difficulty moving or speaking, contact your medical provider immediately.