

# Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Mosquito bites can cause illness. Make you and your home a **Bite-Free Zone** to reduce your risk of mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases such as [West Nile virus](#) and [Zika virus](#):

## Make Yourself a Bite-Free Zone

- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk during warmer months since most types of mosquitoes bite most frequently during these times. Be aware though that some types of mosquitoes bite most frequently during the daytime.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and socks. Choose clothing that is light colored and made of tightly woven material.
- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside.
- If you choose to use insect repellents, use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered repellents](#) with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or para-menthane-diol. Choosing an EPA-registered repellent ensures the EPA has evaluated the product for effectiveness. When used as directed, EPA-registered repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breast-feeding women.
- Always read and follow the product label instructions carefully.
- Reapply insect repellent as directed.
- Do NOT spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen before applying insect repellent
  
- To protect your child from mosquito bites:
  - Do NOT use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months old.
  - Do NOT use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol on children younger than 3 years old.
  - Do NOT apply insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin.
  - Adults: Spray insect repellent onto your hands and then apply to a child's face.
  - Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs.
  - Cover crib, stroller, and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
  - Clothing and gear treated with permethrin or permethrin spray for clothing is available for purchase. Read and follow product information carefully to determine if this is a solution for you.
  - Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. See product information to learn how long the protection will last.
  - If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully.
  - Do NOT use permethrin products directly on skin. They are intended to treat clothing.
  - To protect your pets: DO NOT use any product on pets unless it is specifically made for pets.

## Make Your Home a Bite-Free Zone

Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water (water that does not flow). Getting rid of standing water on your property can help decrease the mosquito population, your risk of getting a mosquito-borne disease, and may also help decrease the need for mosquito control sprays in your neighborhood.

- Cover or empty containers such as trash cans, wading pools, wheelbarrows, and pots.
- Turn containers upside down when not in use so they don't collect water.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers.
- Get rid of old tires.
- Change the water in bird baths every three to five days.
- Check storm drains, window wells, and underneath leaky faucets for standing water.
- Clean roof gutters every year.
- Aerate and/or stock ornamental ponds and fountains with fish.
- Keep swimming pools clean and chlorinated. Make sure that water does not gather on swimming pool covers.
- Treat a pool of standing water that cannot be drained with Bti products. Bti is a naturally-occurring bacterial product that kills mosquito larvae and is safe for people, pets, aquatic life, and plants. You can find these products at local lawn and garden supply stores.
- Make sure window and door screens fit tightly to keep mosquitoes out of your home.
- Run electric fans nearby when spending time outdoors. Mosquitoes have trouble flying in strong winds.
- Replace outdoor lights with yellow "bug" lights, which tend to attract fewer mosquitoes than ordinary lights.

Plants, bug zappers, citronella candles, and mosquito coils have not been proven to repel mosquitoes.