



Factsheet: Mosquitoes

Where do mosquitoes breed?

A mosquito's lifecycle has four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. All mosquitoes need water to breed and spend their larval and pupal stages in water. This is why it is important to prevent water from accumulating around your home and to empty and clean water containers in and around your home weekly.

How long does it take for mosquitoes to hatch after a flood?

Flood-water mosquitoes, which include some species of the *Psorophora*, *Ochlerotatus* and *Aedes* genera, lay eggs above the waterline in ditches, ponds, tanks and other places where water collects. The eggs can remain in dry conditions for several months. After floods or heavy rains when the water level rises, the eggs hatch and in a few days produce swarms of aggressive and hungry mosquitoes. Another wave of mosquitoes occurs later, typically 10 to 14 days after the rains stop. These mosquitoes are a big nuisance, but not all of them cause illnesses.

What about other types of mosquitoes?

Other kinds of mosquitoes, including the *Culex* genus, lay eggs on the stagnant water left by flooding or rain. These mosquitoes may transmit viruses that cause diseases such as West Nile virus and St. Louis encephalitis.

Some *Aedes* mosquitoes breed in and around homes, preferring containers with cleaner water such as plant saucers, bird baths, wading pools, and flower vases. These types of mosquitoes may transmit the viruses that cause chikungunya, dengue, and Zika.

Where are adult mosquitoes found?

Adult flying mosquitoes frequently rest in grass, shrubbery or other foliage. *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that transmit dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses live in and around homes and other areas of human activity.

How can mosquitoes be controlled around the home?

Get rid of standing water in which mosquitoes can breed. If there are any places around your home where water collects, you may be raising mosquitoes.

What specific steps can people take to control mosquitoes outside a home?

Take the following steps to help cut down on the mosquito population:

- Get rid of or empty and clean on a weekly basis any cans, buckets, bottles, old tires, empty pots, plant saucers and other containers that hold water.
- Keep gutters clear of debris and standing water. Remove standing water around structures and from flat roofs.
- Change water in pet dishes at least once a day. Change water in wading pools and bird baths at least weekly.
- Fill in low areas in the yard and holes in trees that collect water.
- Maintain your backyard pool or hot tub and be sure someone takes care of it if you are out of town.

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- Stock ornamental ponds with fish that eat mosquitoes.
- Cover trash containers so they will not collect water.
- Water lawns and gardens carefully so water does not stand for several days.
- Repair any leaking plumbing and outside faucets.
- Screen rain barrels and openings to water tanks or cisterns.
- Keep drains and ditches clear of weeds and trash so water will not collect.

How can people keep mosquitoes out of the house?

Be sure door, porch and window screens are in good condition. Don't leave doors to the outside standing open. Change water weekly in vases, plant saucers, and containers holding plant cuttings inside the home.

How can people protect themselves from mosquito bites?

Cover as much skin as possible with clothing to reduce exposure to mosquito bites and use a recommended repellent on exposed skin every time you are outdoors (do not apply repellent on skin under clothing). Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spray clothes with repellent containing permethrin for extra protection. Also, limit the amount of time you spend outdoors when mosquitoes are active (some bite during the day, others at night).

What do people need to look for in an insect repellent?

Use an EPA-approved insect repellent (see <http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>). Always follow label directions. Store insect repellent at the front and back doors of your home and apply when you go outside. Keep extra repellent in outdoor areas such as patios and decks.

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