



Mosquitoes: What Can You do to Protect Yourself?

Summer is almost here, and this means more time spent outdoors. It means more time spent around mosquitoes too. Some mosquitoes may carry diseases that can infect the people they bite. These can be serious, so be sure to protect yourself and your family.



What Types of Diseases can Mosquitoes Cause?

Diseases that mosquitoes can cause include –

- **West Nile Fever & West Nile Disease:** the West Nile virus causes these. 4 out of 5 people infected with this virus do not get sick. For those who do they may get West Nile Fever or Severe West Nile Disease.
 - People with **West Nile Fever** may have a fever, headache, tiredness, and body aches. Some people may get a skin rash and swollen lymph glands.
 - **Severe West Nile Disease** can cause serious illness. People may have a high fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, coma, tremors, seizures, muscle weakness, and paralysis. Severe West Nile Disease affects 1 in every 150 people infected with the virus. Those most at risk for Severe West Nile Disease are people over the age of 50 and people who have weak immune systems (like transplant patients).
- **EEE:** Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is one of the most serious diseases carried by mosquitoes in the US. Most people infected with EEE virus do not become ill. When symptoms do occur they can range from mild fever and headache to coma. People over age 50 and younger than 15 are most at risk for severe EEE.
- **SLE:** St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE) is a another serious disease carried by mosquitoes. The symptoms of SLE are similar to EEE but infection with the virus that causes SLE leads to serious illness less often than EEE. Those most at risk of serious illness from SLE are the elderly.
- **WEE:** Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE) has similar symptoms to SLE. Those most at risk for serious illness from WEE are young children.
- **Tropical Diseases:** Mosquitoes can cause diseases like dengue fever, malaria, and yellow fever. These are rare in the United States but common in other countries. Before you travel, talk with your doctor to learn how to protect yourself.

If you or a family member becomes sick after being bitten by a mosquito, contact your doctor for advice.

What Can You do to Protect Yourself?

- **Wear Clothes that Keep Mosquitoes Away:** Wear clothes with long sleeves, long pants, and socks to prevent bites.
- **Use Insect Repellent:** There are many kinds of insect repellants that you can use. To be effective they should contain any of these: **DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon or Eucalyptus, (PMD), or IR3535.** Insect repellants can help to keep mosquitoes away. Read the label on the insect repellent container. Be sure to follow directions on the container. Studies show that insect repellants are very safe and that when used properly help prevent bites from mosquitoes and other bugs.
- **Avoid Being Outdoors at Peak Biting Times:** Mosquitoes are most likely to bite at dusk and dawn. If you can, stay inside during these times. Make sure to wear clothes that will protect you and use insect repellent if you do need to go outside during the peak biting times of early morning and evening.

What can you do to protect your Home and Yard?

- **Get Rid of Mosquito Breeding Sites:** Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water. Change water in birdbaths, pet bowls, barrels, and flowerpots every week. Keep swimming pools properly treated and get rid of water that builds on pool covers. Keep gutters clean so water does not back up. Get rid of trash like old tires or containers since they may also collect water.
- **Use Screens on Your Home:** Keeping screens on your windows can stop mosquitoes from getting into your home. Check and repair screens often since mosquitoes can come into your home through torn screens.
- **Pesticides:** If you live in an area with many mosquitoes, pesticides may help to limit the mosquitoes in your yard. Read the product directions carefully to be sure it is the right product and to keep you and your family safe.

Where can I learn more about ways to control mosquitoes and illnesses that mosquitoes can cause?

- **The Center's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Fight the Bite" site:**
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>
- **The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mosquito control site:**
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/mosquitoes/>



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