

# Prevent Mosquito-Borne Illnesses This Summer

**Mosquitoes are more than just summertime pests** – many carry viruses and bacteria that can cause serious illness. Older adults are no more likely than younger people to be bitten by mosquitoes, but they are at higher risk for complications from mosquito-borne illnesses. You can minimize your risk by protecting yourself from mosquito bites and taking steps to control mosquitoes outside and inside your home.



## Protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- **Minimize time outdoors during peak time for mosquitoes** (from dawn until dusk), and be mindful that mosquitoes can bite at any time of the day or night.
- **While outdoors, use an insect repellent** with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol.
- **Follow insect repellent product label instructions** and reapply as directed.
- **Apply sunscreen first** if you are also using sunscreen with insect repellent.
- **Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outdoors**, if possible, during peak mosquito times.



**For more information visit,  
[www.odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov)**

## Control mosquitoes outside your home:

- **Eliminate breeding sites.** Mosquitoes breed in water. Look for any items around your home that can hold rain water (e.g., buckets, rain barrels, bird baths, tires, planters and puddles);
  - If possible, remove these from your property, cover them or move them to where they won't catch water.
  - If removal is not possible, empty any water at least once a week and scrub the sides of the containers to remove potential mosquito egg deposits.
- **Use larvicides** to treat large containers of water that will not be used for drinking and cannot be covered or dumped out.
- **Use an outdoor flying insect spray** in dark humid areas where mosquitoes rest, like under patio furniture, or in the carport or garage; always follow label instructions.
- **Repair cracks or gaps in septic tanks** and cover open vent or plumbing pipes using wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.

## Control mosquitoes inside your home:

- **Keep doors and windows closed** or covered with screens as much as possible.
- **Check window and door screens** and repair or replace any that are worn, torn or have mesh larger than an adult mosquito.
- **Empty and clean household items that hold water** (e.g., vases and flowerpot saucers) at least weekly.
  - **Use an indoor flying insect fogger or indoor insect spray** to kill mosquitoes and treat areas where they rest; follow label instructions and reapply as directed.



No single strategy will help you avoid every mosquito bite, but a combination of the steps above will greatly reduce your risk of a bite and related illness. If you experience flu like symptoms, especially if you have been exposed to mosquitoes, talk to your doctor.

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