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Mosquito-Borne Disease Prevention

Adapted from the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences

Health Promotion

Ah, mosquitoes: one of the few down sides to milder seasons in New England! Apart from being really annoying, mosquitoes can spread diseases that cause illness. In Massachusetts, mosquitoes can carry and rarely transmit eastern equine encephalitis (EEE or “Triple E”) or West Nile virus (WNV) to humans. Being bitten by a mosquito does not guarantee that you will get sick, as only a small number of mosquitoes are infected at a given time. That being said, our region of the State (North Central MA, Middlesex and Worcester counties) has some environmental factors that are favorable for mosquitoes, so it’s important that we take steps to reduce our risk of being bitten.



**DID YOU
KNOW** 

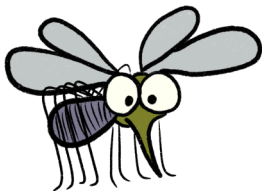
- There are about 3,000 different kinds of mosquitoes in the world. Fifty-one kinds have been identified in Massachusetts.
- Mosquitoes like to spend their time in damp, shady places, and this is also where they lay their eggs. These areas include swamps, marshes, wetlands, woodland pools, standing water inside old tires, watering cans, garbage cans, etc.
- Mosquitoes are attracted to carbon dioxide (what we exhale when we breathe) and can sense it from up to 50 feet away.
- Only female mosquitoes bite; they need the protein from blood to make eggs. Otherwise, both male and female mosquitoes consume plant juices such as nectar.



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Prevention Tips:

- Use insect repellent when you are outdoors
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outside
- Avoid scheduling outdoor activities between dusk and dawn during peak mosquito season (dusk to dawn is when mosquitoes are most active). Keep in mind however that mosquitoes can bite at any time of day.
- Ensure window and door screens are properly attached and free from damage
- Remove standing water from around your home (standing water is often where mosquitoes lay their eggs)



About Repellents:

- Always read the label and follow instructions carefully
- Only spray in well-ventilated areas
- Wash skin with soap and water to remove after use
- Do NOT use on cuts, or irritated skin
- Do NOT use on children under 2 months of age
- Apply repellent to hands, then rub on face avoiding eyes and mouth

The role of your Local Board of Health

Positive lab results for mosquito-borne illnesses are reportable to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) per State law. MDPH then tasks your local board of health with case investigation and follow-up. One of Nashoba's public health nurses may reach out to you to see how you are doing, ensure you are getting appropriate treatment, and to help track the spread of communicable disease. We also educate the public about preventing mosquito-borne illness to help keep our communities as healthy as possible.