

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health Information for the Public — How to Fight Mosquitoes

Why worry about mosquitoes?

Mosquitoes can cause illness... La Crosse encephalitis and West Nile virus have been found in West Virginia. Worldwide, mosquitoes spread illnesses like malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and chikungunya.

What can I do about mosquitoes?

1. Empty standing water in old tires, cemetery urns, buckets, plastic covers, toys, or any other container where mosquitoes may breed.
2. Empty and change the water in bird baths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels, and potted plant trays at least once a week if not more often.
3. Drain or fill temporary pools with dirt.
4. Keep swimming pools treated and circulating.
5. Keep rain gutters clean and in good repair.
6. Maintain ditches so stagnant water does not collect on your property.
7. Maintain septic systems properly.
8. Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535. Apply sparingly to children before they play out of doors, and rinse children off with soap and water when they come back in. Do not apply repellent to the face and hands of young children because they may rub it in their eyes. Follow label directions and precautions closely.
9. Use head nets, long sleeves, and long pants if you venture into areas with high mosquito populations.
10. Make sure window and door screens are bug tight.

Mosquito Control Myths

FALSE: Ultraviolet lights used in bug zappers and ultrasonic devices are effective.

FALSE: Bats and Purple Martin birds eat enough mosquitoes to be useful.

FALSE: Citronella candles and citronella repellents, and garlic keep mosquitoes away.

TRUE: Integrated pest management (IPM) is today's standard for controlling mosquitoes. IPM involves getting rid of mosquito breeding sites, larvicide and biological controls, as well as public relations and education.

-adapted from CDC, American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA), and EPA materials

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