

Mosquitoes in Our Community



We Can Control Mosquitoes If We Work Together

Mosquitoes Bite!

Like many communities across the nation, our City has an abundance of mosquitoes, both night biters and day biters. In fact, some experts believe the Asian tiger mosquito population may be increasing in our area. Other species and new diseases may also reach us through travel and commercial activity.

The impact of these pests on our health and quality of life presents concerns for our community. However, the potential for these and other mosquitoes to spread disease is clear.

Unfortunately, neither the mosquitoes nor the diseases they may carry respect municipal or property boundaries. All of us must share the responsibility for controlling mosquitoes.

It is important to understand how mosquitoes breed, what you can do to prevent them, and how to protect your family, your pets, and yourself.

Why control mosquitoes?

Besides their annoying bites, mosquitoes transmit infectious diseases to humans, horses, dogs, and other mammals. While several tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue are spread by mosquitoes and might someday become serious problems in our area, this brochure focuses on those most common in our area now.

West Nile Virus (WNV) has affected our area since 2001, and it has continued to cause problems for humans and animals since that time. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has reported disease transmission through donated blood, pregnancy, and breast-feeding, in addition to mosquito bites. Visit the CDC web page for more info: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a viral disease that causes a severe and frequently fatal brain inflammation of horses and humans, mainly infants and children. Survivors may have permanent nervous system damage. Outbreaks of EEE have been associated with excessive rainfall during summer and the preceding autumn. In Maryland, EEE occurs mainly in Eastern Shore counties.

Dead birds. The State is no longer testing birds for West Nile virus. Please shovel dead birds into a plastic garbage bag, seal the bag, and dispose in a garbage can. To find out more, call the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Mosquito Control Section at 410-841-5870.

Heartworm is an internal parasite spread by mosquitoes that can be fatal to dogs and cats. Ask your veterinarian about a preventive treatment available for pets.

Know the enemy

Mosquitoes pass through three distinct life stages before they become adults capable of biting and transmitting disease. The diagram describes the cycle and shows what each stage looks like when magnified several times.

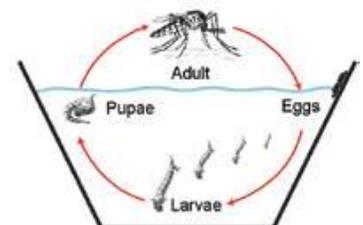


Image Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/vectoncontrolsheet>

Don't let them indoors!

Check screens and screen doors to make sure they fit snugly. Repair openings larger than a dime, and ensure that window screens are closed whenever the windows are open.

Brush mosquitoes off before entering your home or automobile. Some species, such as the Asian tiger mosquito, will follow you indoors and into your vehicle.

Don't let them bite Wear light-colored clothing, cover as much skin as possible, and use a proven insect repellent. Note: The CDC reports that "Ultrasonic" devices and Vitamin B are NOT effective in preventing mosquito bites.

Don't let them mature!

Our homes and gardens can become mosquito breeding sites very quickly- sometimes in just a few days.

At least once a week, from May through September, try to take a few minutes to tour your property and ensure that there is no standing water that will allow mosquitoes to develop. Dump the water and any larvae before mosquitoes can emerge and fly.

Clean rain gutters at least twice a year- once at the end of May after trees like oaks and maples have finished flowering, and in November after autumn leaves have fallen.

Check for containers or trash in places that may be hard to see- under bushes, parked vehicles or trailers, and under your home or deck.

Involve your kids by making a game of finding and emptying things that hold water.

Offer to help if neighbors are unable to perform weekly inspections when they are vacationing, ill, or disabled.

Where to Find and Stop Mosquitoes

- ✓ Birdbaths and pet dishes: Flush and refill them every four days.
- ✓ Boats/canoes/kayaks: Cover or turn them upside down to keep water from collecting.
- ✓ Children's wagons, sand buckets, toys and wading pools: Cover or turn them upside down to keep water from collecting.
- ✓ Clogged or sagging rain gutters: Repair sagging or damaged gutters; keep them clean and free flowing.
- ✓ Downspout extensions, especially black corrugated plastic tubing: Keep them clean and free flowing,
- ✓ Flowerpots with drain trays: Keep them clean and empty regularly.
- ✓ Old tires: Call the Public Works Department at 240-487-3590 to schedule a pick up. There is fee of \$4 for each tire.
- ✓ Tarps & swimming pool covers: Float an inflated inner tube under the cover to prevent water from collecting in the folds.
- ✓ Uncovered garbage cans, recycling carts and their contents: Cover or turn these cans and contents upside down to prevent water from collecting in them.
- ✓ Uncovered rain barrels: Cover with a fine mesh screen, add an overflow hole on the rain barrel to keep the water level below the screen and drain every four to six days.

A pamphlet on mosquitoes was initially prepared in June 2003 for the residents of College Park by the Committee For A Better Environment (CBE) with the assistance of the UM Department of Residential Facilities.

This revision was prepared by City Staff in August 2012. For information about CBE activities, Please visit www.collegeparkmd.gov or contact the City's Planning Department at 240-487-3538;

You may also contact Code Enforcement at 240-487-3570 or Public Works at 240-487-3590 for additional information.