

Hendricks County Health Department



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2015

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MOSQUITO SEASON BEGINS SOON IN HENDRICKS COUNTY *Warm, wet weather means taking steps now to prevent mosquito breeding*

HENDRICKS COUNTY – As warm and wet weather hits Hendricks County and central Indiana, public health officials from the Hendricks County Health Department want to remind residents to take steps now to prevent mosquito breeding and mosquito-borne disease on their property.

“We have already received calls from residents concerned about mosquitoes on or near their property,” says Julie Haan, Director of Environmental Health at the Hendricks County Health Department. “While we have not seen mosquitoes yet, now is the time to prepare for mosquito season so we can stop their breeding and help prevent cases of mosquito-borne disease like West Nile virus.”

Residents can help prevent mosquitoes by getting rid of breeding areas on their property:

- Repair failed septic systems
- Dispose of or regularly empty water from old tires, cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, and other containers that can hold water
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left out of doors
- Clean clogged roof gutters
- Drain pools of standing water and keep pool covers free of standing water
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish
- Keep birdbaths clean

“Old tires are great places for mosquitoes to breed,” states Haan. “The Hendricks County Solid Waste Management District will take tires during the Tox-Away Days they host throughout the spring and summer. If you have tires you need to dispose of, bring them to the first Tox-Away Day on April 9 between 8:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. at Brownsburg High School. The first six tires are free.”

Haan also encourages all residents to start taking steps to prevent mosquito bites, which can transmit diseases from infected mosquitoes to humans:

- Stay indoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active
- When outside, cover as much skin as possible with light colored, tightly woven clothes

- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts, and tuck pant legs into shoes or socks
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, PMD, or IR3535 as directed
- Use mosquito netting if staying or sleeping outside in an unscreened structure

Eliminating mosquito breeding grounds and preventing mosquito bites are the best ways to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile virus. The virus has been found yearly in mosquitoes in Hendricks County.

West Nile virus can cause West Nile fever, a mild form of the illness, which can include fever, headache, body aches, swollen lymph glands, or a rash. People over 50 or those with weak immune systems are more likely to develop a severe form of the disease that can cause swelling of the brain and spinal cord, muscle paralysis, or death.

In addition to preventing mosquito bites at home, residents travelling to the Caribbean and Central and South America should take extra care to protect themselves to prevent contracting the Chikungunya and Zika viruses.

Chikungunya causes high fever, long-term joint and muscle pain, headache, nausea and vomiting, and a rash. Zika causes fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis. Neither virus is being spread from mosquitoes in Indiana. Cases of these illnesses in local residents are linked to travel to the areas listed above. Residents who have travelled to these areas and experience symptoms should seek medical help.

There is currently an investigation in Brazil on the possibility of a Zika virus outbreak causing an increase in microcephaly, a condition where an unborn baby's brain does not fully develop during pregnancy and causes a smaller head size. Pregnant women are advised not to travel to the Caribbean and Central and South America at this time.

For more information about mosquitoes, contact the Hendricks County Health Department Environmental Health Division at (317) 745-9217 or visit the Indiana State Department of Health's Mosquito-Borne Diseases page at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/23592.htm>.