



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2016

Contact: Office of Communications (614) 644-8562

Fight the Bite: Take Precautions to Prevent Mosquito-Borne and Tick-Borne Diseases

Including Zika virus, West Nile virus and Lyme disease

COLUMBUS – With the arrival of mosquito and tick season in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) urges Ohioans to “fight the bite” and take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and tick bites to avoid diseases they may carry, such as Zika virus, West Nile virus and Lyme disease.

In Ohio, ticks are usually active April through September, and mosquitoes May through October.

“You can take some simple precautions at home and when traveling to prevent potentially serious mosquito-borne and tick-borne diseases,” said ODH Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio. “Zika virus has received a lot of attention as a disease that can be transmitted by some mosquitoes, but there are other mosquito-borne diseases as well, including West Nile virus. Ticks also can transmit diseases like Lyme disease.”

Mosquitoes

The primary mosquito that transmits Zika virus is found in the tropics and southern U.S., but it is not known to be established in Ohio. A “cousin” of the mosquito is found in parts of Ohio and may potentially transmit Zika virus. A type of mosquito found in Ohio can transmit West Nile virus, and the state reported 35 cases last year.

Mosquitoes can live indoors and outdoors, and some species bite during the day while others bite at dusk and dawn.

Here are some tips to avoid mosquito bites and prevent mosquito-borne diseases:

- If you are outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, be sure to wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, shoes and socks.
- Wear light-colored clothing, which is less attractive to mosquitoes.
- Use EPA-registered mosquito repellent and follow the label directions.
- Wear clothing and gear treated with permethrin, an insecticide (do not apply permethrin directly to skin).
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Here are some tips to eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home:

- Eliminate standing water.
- Empty or remove water-holding containers, such as buckets, unused flower pots and bird baths.
- Make sure all roof gutters are clean and draining properly.
- Keep child wading pools empty and on their sides when not being used.

(more)

Ticks

Ohio ticks can transmit a variety of diseases, including Lyme disease, and the state reported 154 cases last year.

Here are some tips to avoid tick bites and prevent tick-borne diseases:

- Avoid direct contact with ticks by avoiding wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter, and by walking in the center of trails.
- Wear clothing and gear treated with permethrin, an insecticide (do not apply permethrin directly to skin).
- Use EPA-registered tick repellent and follow the label directions.

Here are some tips for finding and removing ticks attached to your body using fine-tipped tweezers:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick, which can cause the mouth parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub or soap and water.
- Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- Avoid folklore remedies such as "painting" a tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly or using heat to make the tick detach from your skin.

Go to the ODH website at [odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov) for more information about how to prevent mosquito-borne and tick-borne diseases and other information and resources.

###

Note to Media – Click on the following links for more information on:

- Zika virus <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/bid/zdp/diseases/zika.aspx>
- West Nile virus <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/bid/zdp/diseases/wnv.aspx>
- Lyme Disease <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/bid/zdp/diseases/lyme.aspx>