

ZIKA FACT SHEET:

Controlling Mosquitoes in Your Home, Yard and Community

Understand the Mosquito Life Cycle

Taking an integrated approach to controlling mosquitoes in yards, playgrounds and parks, helps protect our communities from disease and distress, not to mention preserves family backyard barbeques and the annual community fun day. Integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated mosquito management, keep these pests from wreaking havoc on our community.

Understanding the [mosquito life cycle](#) is important if you want to keep the insects from making your home their own.

All mosquitoes go through the following four stages during their life:

- Stage 1: **Egg** that hatches when it's exposed to water
- Stage 2: **Larva** is a small "wiggler" that lives in water
- Stage 3: **Pupa** is larger than larva and still in the water but it does not feed
- Stage 4: **Adult** leaves the water and is able to fly shortly after

A mosquito typically lives up to two weeks, but can live as long as one month depending on conditions. For example, eggs can survive longer in dry conditions.

[Larvae mosquito treatments](#) are applied directly to water sources to stop larvae from becoming flying, biting adult mosquitoes.

[Adult mosquito treatments](#) are localized treatments used by public health mosquito control programs to reduce the flying mosquito population.

Make your yard less hospitable

Aedes larvae can survive in many unexpected – and easily unnoticed – locations. Check all areas of your yard for standing water. Open trash bins, tree holes, bird baths, clogged rain gutters, uncovered boats, potted plant saucers, pet water bowls, and neglected swimming pools are all great breeding sites. Even a capful of water trapped in a favorite toy can lead to a population boom.

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are considered to be container breeders, which mean they can reproduce in even the smallest pools of standing water in a bottle cap left unturned. Because of this, it makes the increased rainfall across the U.S. a major factor in how our communities can contain or prevent the Zika virus from spreading.

Building mosquito control into your everyday lawn care regimen and home cleaning routine can help prevent these pests from staking claim over your home or yard. Taking an integrated approach to mosquito control means taking steps to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in your yard and outdoor areas. This includes identifying the control products that would work best for you and reading and following the label instructions to apply the product the right way at the right time. It also includes mowing your yard regularly to reduce tall grass that locks in water between the blades and provides

conditions conducive to mosquito breeding, and if you're an apartment dweller, could mean removing standing water from flower pots or watering cans. Don't forget to apply mosquito repellent before you head outside for any lawn, garden or maintenance work!

To find out more about potential mosquito breeding sites, visit:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>

Keep mosquitoes out

Don't let outbreaks and emerging threats of Zika deter you from spending time outdoors. Taking steps to prevent the virus and becoming familiar with the pest can help protect you and your family:

- **Keep pests out by checking your screens.** Make sure your window and door screens are in good repair and all windows and doors are closed – mosquitoes and other pests that carry diseases can fit through the tiniest holes.
- **Plant your garden away from exterior doors.** Plant pest-harboring shrubs and ornamentals away from your home to ensure they don't have easy access to the indoors.
- **Limit mosquito-friendly breeding locations around your home.** Remove all standing water in bird baths, buckets, flower pots or even the smallest amount in bottle caps and other small containers or litter.
- **Cut your grass short and often.** Mow your lawn regularly to remove hiding places for mosquitoes and reduce excess moisture in your grass.
- **Restock and apply repellents.** Restock EPA-approved mosquito control products and repellents that are proven to reduce and repel mosquitoes. Apply repellents according to label instructions before yard work or other outdoor activities.

DIY options for yard treatment

When dealing with any pest problem on your property, it's important to choose right and use right by following these steps:

- 1) **Identify the problem:** Survey your outdoor areas for potential mosquito breeding grounds as a first step. Then, look for mosquitoes.
- 2) **Select the right product:** Choose the right mosquito control products and repellents for your needs. The EPA lists products on its website and helps you make the right selection at <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/deet>.
- 3) **Read and follow the label instructions:** Product manufacturers work to make product labels easy to understand and follow. Following all label instructions ensures safe use.

Weeds and shrubs are mosquitoes' safe haven. You can reduce mosquitoes in your yard by:

- **Weeding and mowing the lawn regularly** to help reduce mosquitoes' ideal habitat.
- **Incorporating mosquito control into your lawn care routine** no matter the season.
- **Applying mosquito control products.** [Larvae mosquito treatments](#) applied directly to water sources will help control growing mosquito larva in the early stages of life and [adult mosquito treatments](#) can be used to reduce mosquito populations.

- **Contacting your local mosquito control district** if you have questions.

When applying mosquito control products to your yards or gardens, remember:

- Always read and follow all label instructions – this ensures safety and effectiveness.
- Only EPA-registered products have been proven to control mosquitoes.

To learn more about pesticide applications dos and don'ts, visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/dos-and-donts-pest-control>

Integrated Mosquito Management: a thoughtful, effective approach

If you are having trouble controlling the mosquitoes on your property, your health department is another available resource. Your Health Department takes an **integrated mosquito management** approach to help reduce mosquito habitats and determine the most effective treatment throughout the mosquito life cycle to keep our families and communities safe. Integrated mosquito management uses a variety of tools and methods, including:

- Monitoring populations through surveillance programs
- Reducing mosquito breeding sites such as old tires, and empty any cans, buckets, bottles, clogged rain gutters, and birdbaths
- Treating mosquitoes with pesticides in the larval stage before they fly
- Treating adult mosquitoes to reduce the biting population

Rather hire a professional to take control of your yard? Here's what to do.

As you take ownership of protecting yourself and your family from mosquitoes, you may consider reaching out to a professional to treat your property. When selecting a pest control partner, be sure to ask questions that help you understand whether or not they approach mosquito control with an integrated solution, their experience, and their training and licensing.

Here are a few questions you may want to consider when talking to a pest control professional:

- *Are you licensed by the state to apply pesticides?*
- *How long have you been in business?*
- *How long have you been treating for mosquitoes?*
- *What training have you and your team undergone specific to mosquito control?*
- *How do you decide when to treat?*
- *How does this treatment align with our community's mosquito control districts' control plan?*

Helping community health officials control mosquitoes

As they do regularly, many cities across the U.S. have added Zika surveillance programs to their mosquito control activities. If you have questions about mosquitoes where you live, it is recommended

that you contact your local mosquito control district. More information can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/mosquitocontrol>.

Mosquito control officials also provide information about the products used for mosquito treatment, treatment times, the types of mosquitoes in your area and information about their habitat. Cooperating with mosquito control workers in your community by allowing them to assess and apply their knowledge to your home and community will help better protect public health and mitigate the threat to at-risk communities.

Learn more on how your local mosquito control service performs, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/prevention/index.html>

To find out where your local mosquito control district is located and how to contact them, visit:

<http://npic.orst.edu/vecmlr.html>