



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Cole County
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MOSQUITO AND TICKBORNE DISEASE AWARENESS

FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Summer is the perfect time to spend more time outdoors. It is also when people may be exposed to vector-borne diseases spread from the bites of infected ticks and mosquitoes. Ticks and mosquitoes may carry bacteria, parasites or viruses. Ticks are found in wooded areas, high grass, or leaf litter. They are most active during the spring, summer and fall, but in warmer areas may be active all year round. Mosquitoes may be found near standing water, or in weedy or wooded areas. They are usually most active during dawn and dusk in the warmer months.

As of June 8, 2016, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has completed testing on 182 people for the Zika virus. So far, six have tested positive (4 males and 2 females). These numbers could change daily as more tests results are finalized. All six of the positive individuals were exposed to the virus in another country before returning to Missouri. There have been no reported cases of Zika virus contracted from a mosquito bite in Missouri.

Unfortunately, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, Zika virus has the potential to be spread through a mosquito bite, through unprotected sexual contact, through blood transfusion and an infected pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy. There is not currently a vaccine for Zika virus. The best prevention measure is to avoid mosquito bites in areas with ongoing transmission. Ways to avoid mosquito bites while

outdoors include wearing EPA-registered insect repellent with DEET, wearing pants and long sleeves, or remaining indoors in an air conditioned environment.

The CDC is recommending pregnant women avoid traveling to Zika-affected areas which include countries ranging from Mexico into the Caribbean, Central American and South America. Please consult CDC resources for a listing of all areas and other information about Zika virus: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

Nearly 80 percent of people infected with the virus will have no symptoms. Typically, symptoms are mild and include fever, rash, joint soreness and/or redness of eyes. International health officials are examining the connection between pregnant women contracting the virus and a birth defect called microcephaly in their newborn infants. According to the CDC, babies with microcephaly often have smaller head sizes and brains that might not have developed properly.

The most effective way to reduce the mosquito population on your property is to eliminate their habitat. Residents of Cole County should eliminate standing and stagnant water in locations such as: tires, gutters, unmaintained birdbaths, tarps, and other items that trap water. Look at the conditions present on your property. If you have tall grass, weeds, and bushes in combination with a small pool of water, you have the ideal habitat for mosquito breeding. Eliminating these conditions alone can significantly reduce the adult biting population on your property and the surrounding area. If you have a small pond or lagoon that holds water, consider treatment with larvacides that prevent the hatching of mosquitoes in these areas.

In addition to CCHD monitoring disease case reports for Cole County, Cole County Public Works (CCPW) is currently treating catch basins containing water along county roads with larvacides. When feasible, CCPW and CCHD personnel take actions to eliminate mosquito habitat or enforce county ordinances to eliminate favorable conditions for mosquitos.

Cole County's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy strives to control mosquitoes and other vectors through a combination of minimizing habitat and strategic use of larvacides and insecticides. Specific criteria and prevention methods are generally outlined in a response matrix in the **"Cole County Integrated Pest Management Policy"** which is available on the CCHD website at www.colehealth.org.

To prevent tick bites, wear light colored clothing, long sleeves and pants, tuck pants into socks during outdoor activities. Long loose hair should be covered, braided or tied when venturing into areas where ticks are apt to be. Spray your clothing. When coming in from outside activities where you might have encountered ticks, throw clothing into the dryer set on high heat. This will ensure no ticks survive on your clothing. Remember to do a tick check, take a shower and wash your hair. Keep pets that have outside exposure off furniture especially bedding.

More information on mosquito and tickborne disease can be found at www.cdc.gov. If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Brandon Rekus at Cole County Health Department or email at brekus@colecouny.org.