



City of Meriden, Connecticut

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



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Public Health Summer Safety Series – Week 3: **Mosquito Bites: Prevention Tips**

(June 5, 2017) – Summer is finally here, and that means that it's mosquito season! The Meriden Department of Health and Human Services would like to remind residents that as we enjoy time outside this summer we should also take precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Bites from mosquitos are not only annoying, but they can carry disease as well.

The most common mosquito-borne illness in Connecticut is West Nile Virus (WNV), which is caused when an infected mosquito bites a bird that carries the virus and then in turn bites a human. Most people who become infected with West Nile virus do not develop any symptoms; about 1 in 5 will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of West Nile virus disease recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Zika Virus is spread mostly by the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. These mosquitoes bite during the day and night. Zika can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause certain birth defects. Women who are pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant should speak with their doctor before traveling to areas where the *Aedes* mosquito is most common; these include Puerto Rico, Cuba, and South America.

The following are tips to protect against mosquito bites:

- Minimize time outdoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. If you are outside during this time, consider using mosquito repellent when outdoors and follow the directions on the label. The most effective repellents contain DEET Or Picaridin.
- When using DEET, use the lowest concentration effective for the time spent outdoors (for example, 6% lasts approximately 2 hours and 20% for 4 hours). Wash treated skin when returning indoors. Do not apply under clothing, to wounds or irritated skin, the hands of children, or to infants less than 2 months of age.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair without any holes or gaps.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors during dusk and dawn, or when in mosquito-infested areas such as wetlands or woods.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outside.



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Take these measures to reduce mosquitoes around the home:

- This April, May, and June have been wet months here in Connecticut. Remember to look for standing water when doing yard cleanup. Dump water out of any container or object that can hold standing water, such as ceramic pots, tires, and wading pools.
- Clean clogged roof gutters.
- Change water in bird baths every week.
- Drain any collected water from pool covers every week.
- Use landscaping techniques to eliminate areas where water can collect on your property.

This summer, look for free summer safety emergency kits from the Meriden Department of Health and Human Services at community events. The kit will contain sunscreen, insect repellent wipes, tweezers, band aids and tick removal cards. Additional information about mosquito-borne diseases and other summer safety public health issues is available at the Department (165 Miller Street); you can also call 203-630-4226 or visit www.meridenhealth.com.

Written by Desiree Rondeau, Public Health Intern.