

BE AWARE

Mosquitoes are always active during the warmer months with populations greatest during spring, summer and early autumn, particularly following rainfall or unusually high tides.

Mosquito Control: What are Local and State Governments doing?

The Department of Health, in collaboration with Local Governments, conduct mosquito control programs in areas where mosquitoes are suspected of carrying disease. However, mosquitoes are a part of the natural ecosystem. Therefore, it is important for people to take personal measures to reduce the risk of contracting diseases and to help reduce the breeding of mosquitoes. If you notice prolonged standing water or you suspect a certain location may have breeding mosquitoes, please let your Local Government know and they will investigate.

For further information on mosquito-borne disease or control please contact your Local Government Environmental Health Officer or the Environmental Health Directorate, Department of Health:



www.canning.wa.gov.au
1300 422 664



www.sercul.org.au
9458 5664



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of Health

www.public.health.wa.gov.au
9388 4999

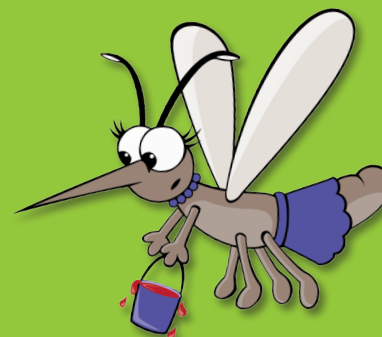
MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES

The facts about mosquito-borne diseases:

- For a female mosquito to become a disease vector (a biting insect that transmits a disease or parasite from one animal or person to another) she must first take a blood meal from an animal infected with a virus.
- Once infected, female mosquitoes can transmit the virus to another person or animal during her next blood meal.
- Vector mosquitoes can breed in your backyard or surrounding neighbourhood.
- You can only get mosquito-borne diseases from the bite of an infected mosquito. You can not catch them from an infected person or animal directly.
- Not all species bite humans and not all carry diseases. Most mosquitoes are just a nuisance.
- The best protection from mosquito-borne diseases is to avoid mosquito bites.



Adult Mosquito
Photo: Department of Health



MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IN WA

In WA, there are four viruses that can be transmitted by mosquitoes to people including:

- Ross River virus (RRV): This is WA's most common mosquito-borne disease. Symptoms include joint pain and swelling, sore muscles, rash, fever and fatigue.
- Barmah Forest virus (BFV): This is similar to RRV, but does not cause as severe symptoms.
- Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE): This is a rare but potential fatal disease occurring mainly in the northern half of WA.
- Kunjin virus (KUN): This disease also occurs in the north of WA but is rare; however, monitoring is still undertaken.

There is currently no vaccine or specific treatment for these viruses. It is very important to prevent mosquito bites if you want to avoid getting a mosquito-borne disease. If you travel overseas, there are a large number of other serious diseases that can be transmitted by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can also carry a parasite called 'heartworm' that infects dogs.



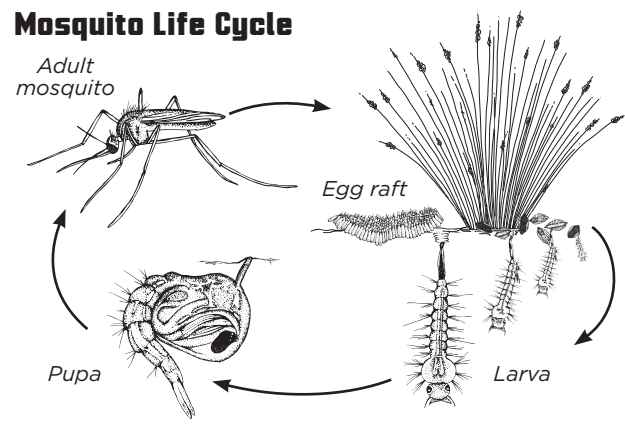
MOZZIE Wise

**How to protect yourself
and your home from
mosquitoes**

MOSQUITO FACTS

- Mosquitoes belong to a fly group called Diptera.
- There are about 100 species of mosquitoes in Western Australia.
- Less than 20 represent a significant risk to human health, either as nuisance-biting pests or disease transmitters to humans and animals.
- The main food of both male and female mosquitoes is nectar and plant juices.
- Only female mosquitoes bite humans or animals to obtain their blood meal to produce their eggs.
- Mosquitoes provide food for other animals (e.g. insects, frogs, fish, turtles, birds and bats), help to pollinate plants and their larvae are effective filter feeders.
- Mosquitoes can breed in standing water within natural or constructed wetlands as well as water holding containers in urban environments.
- Most female mosquitoes lay their eggs on the surface or at the edge of the water.
- Mosquitoes can develop from an egg to an adult in one week during the warmer months.

Mosquito Life Cycle



PROTECTION

There are simple ways to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases.

Keep the mosquitoes outside

- Ensure you have flywire screens on windows and doors.
- Ceiling fans and air conditioning are also effective in protecting yourself from mosquitoes.
- Use a mosquito net over your bed if your house is unscreened or you live in a mosquito breeding area.

Enjoy being outdoors

- Use fans to keep air moving on porches, decks and gazebos.
- Use yellow lights outside which tend to attract fewer mosquitoes than ordinary lights.
- Dress babies and small children in long sleeved clothing to cover as much skin as possible.
- Use insect nets over prams and cots.
- Before travelling, do your research and take precautions to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.
- Recognise and avoid areas of high mosquito activity, especially during dusk and dawn (e.g. salt marshes, river flood plains, billabongs, swamps).
- When camping, cover sleeping areas or beds with mosquito nets.
- Use insect repellents. For further information: www.medent.usyd.edu.au/RepellentGuidelines.pdf

REMEMBER THE 4ds

Personal protection is the best way to reduce being bitten by mosquitoes.



Limit the amount of time spent outdoors at **Dusk & Dawn**. That is when mosquito activity is at its greatest.

Defend yourself when going outside by using insect repellent.

Dress in loose, light coloured long-sleeved shirts and pants and shoes and socks when you are outdoors in areas where mosquitoes are active.

Drain water from any place where it has been standing for four or more days.

PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING

In the warmer months a small amount of water in a container or puddle can breed more than 1000 mosquitoes each week. Check and eliminate mosquito-breeding sites in your backyard with these easy to follow tips:

- ☐ Change birdbath and pet bowl water frequently.
- ☐ Empty pot plant saucers and replace with damp soil.
- ☐ Remove rubbish and other organic debris that collect water.
- ☐ Dispose of old tyres. Tyres can store enough water to breed thousands of mosquitoes.
- ☐ Repair outdoor dripping taps and leaky pipes.
- ☐ Maintain sprinkler systems, control runoff and do not overwater.
- ☐ Change the landscape in your garden to ensure drainage of standing water.
- ☐ Remove weeds and tall grass, especially in areas which stay wet.
- ☐ Stock ornamental ponds and aquatic gardens with native fish such as Western Pygmy Perch.
- ☐ Clean clogged gutters.
- ☐ Maintain pools and check pool covers are not collecting water.
- ☐ Check for standing water on tarps, plastic covers, containers and toys.
- ☐ Check for standing water around air conditioners.
- ☐ Store boats, canoes, dinghies, trailers and wheel barrows so they do not hold water.