

# Preventing Mosquitoes and the Diseases They Carry



*If you're breeding them.... you're feeding them!*

## Mosquito Fact and Fiction

**Fiction:** High weeds and grass cause mosquitoes.

**Fact:** Mosquitoes rest in high grass, weeds, and shrubs or any thick vegetation during the heat of the day. **Mosquitoes must have water to breed.**

**Fiction:** The creek/ditch/stream running behind my house is the reason why I have a mosquito problem.

**Fact:** Most problems with mosquitoes are due to standing/stagnant water, not running water. Also streams/creeks/ditches often contain fish and other wildlife that eat mosquitoes.

**Fiction:** I have red itchy bumps...I must have a big mosquito problem.

**Fact:** Possibly, but other insects, dry skin, and contact with poison ivy can cause these same problems. If you don't see mosquitoes it may not be mosquitoes.

**Fiction:** When it rains, the drainage ditch holds water and breeds mosquitoes.

**Fact:** Unless the drainage ditch holds water for 5 to 7 consecutive days, it will not breed mosquitoes.

**Fiction:** Bug zappers will kill all the mosquitoes.

**Fact:** Bug zappers actually attract more mosquitoes (and other insects) than they kill. Place the bug zapper at the back of your yard and not around the patio area where you entertain.

**Fiction:** My neighbor has a pool which is attracting mosquitoes.

**Fact:** Unless the swimming pool is not maintained (pump not running, no chlorine in pool water), it should not cause any mosquito problems.

**Fiction:** If I call the Health Department, they will come out and spray for mosquitoes.

**Fact:** Spraying is not the first line of defense against mosquitoes. It only provides a few days of relief from the mosquitoes. Standing water is the real problem! Eliminating the mosquito breeding sites in your yard is the first line of defense against the pesky mosquito.

## Health Implications

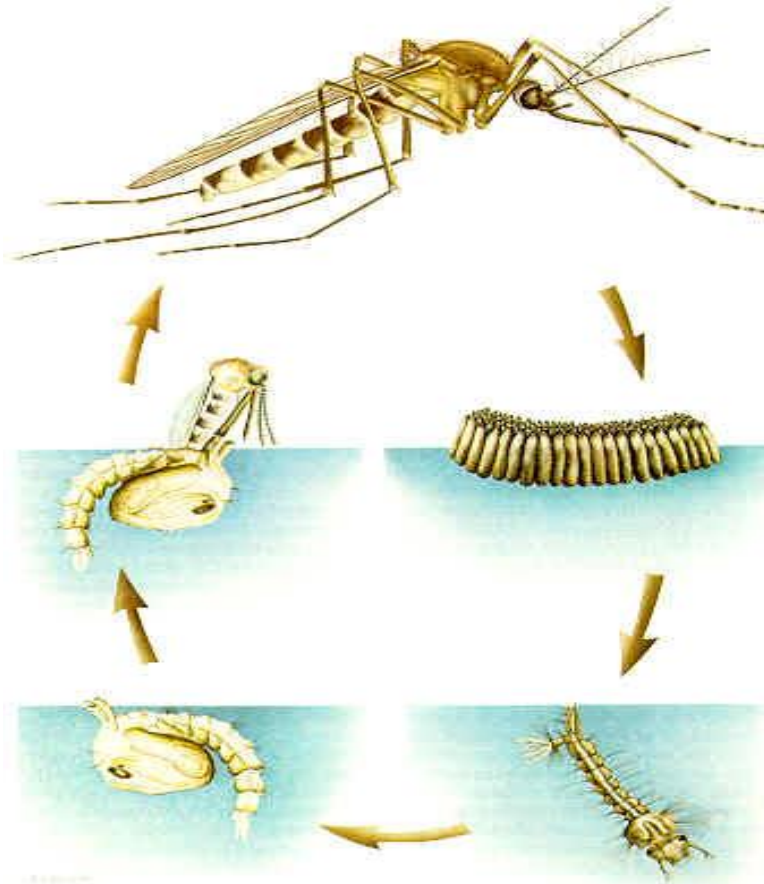
- Mosquitoes carry an assortment of diseases including West Nile Virus and Encephalitis.
- People of all ages are susceptible to illnesses caused by mosquitoes, but especially the very young and the elderly.
- We are especially concerned with West Nile Virus. This disease caused by mosquitoes has been in this area during since 2002.
- Most infections caused by West Nile Virus are mild, and symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. More severe infection may be marked by headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and, rarely, death.
- Do your part to prevent diseases caused by mosquito bites and use the information in this pamphlet to reduce areas where mosquitoes can live and breed.

### **If you must go outside when mosquitoes are present you should consider doing one if not all of the following**

- Using an insect repellent that contains DEET, picaradin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Wearing shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials to keep mosquitoes away. Pant legs should be tucked into shoes or socks and collars should be buttoned.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure.

The Jackson County Health Department urges you to follow label directions when using any mosquito repellent or insecticide for mosquito control.

# MOSQUITO LIFE CYCLE












**Eggs:** may be found in rafts, several eggs or individually. Eggs are laid in water, on moist soil, or frequently flooded soils, but require standing water to hatch.

**Larvae:** live exclusively in water. These are the “little wigglers” that are often seen in puddles, water in buckets and water in tires. This is the easiest, most productive stage to attack mosquito populations.

**Pupa:** live exclusively in water. Also known as “tumblers,” pupa resemble tiny cocktail shrimp. This stage is the “cocoon” stage for mosquitoes.

**Adult:** the only stage that does not rely on water for life and the only stage that bites. Only the female mosquitoes of some mosquitoes bite humans.

## Areas around the home that provide breeding sites for mosquitoes.

	<p>Birdbaths. Empty every 3-5 days, or add a cap full of bleach.</p>
	<p>Garbage cans, overturned garbage can lids, buckets, paint cans, tin cans. plastic containers, bottles or any rubbish that can hold water. Empty water and store so that water will not collect again or dispose of.</p>
	<p>Tires without rims. Water collects on the inside and breeds mosquitoes. Remove or store the tires out of the weather to prevent water collecting inside.</p>
	<p>Small, ornamental fishponds, backyard wading pools and swimming pools that do not circulate the water. Add the appropriate chemicals to swimming pools, empty wading pools frequently, and stock fish ponds with mosquito eating fish.</p>
	<p>Flowerpots without drain holes, the water trays under the flowerpots. Make drain holes and empty standing water every 3-5 days.</p>
	<p>Clogged gutters, downspouts and knotholes in trees. Clean the gutters regularly; fill knotholes in trees with sand or cement.</p>
	<p>Pet food bowls. Empty out standing water every 3-5 days.</p>
	<p>Cemetery Monument vases. Fill with sand to prevent water accumulation.</p>
	<p><u>Anything</u> that will hold water for 5 to 7 consecutive days. Empty and store all the containers so they will not collect water.</p>