



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

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## **Take Steps to Reduce Mosquito Populations** *Protect yourself against bites*

Following June's heavy rains and flooding across the state, State health and environmental officials urge residents to take simple steps to reduce exposure to mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus tend to breed in places where there is standing, stagnant water with a high concentration of organic content. Containers that hold water for an extended period of time, such as birdbaths and gutters, are breeding sites for these mosquitoes because they lack the natural predators found in wetlands and lakes. According to the Department of Natural Resources, even a single discarded tire can produce 500 mosquitoes.

Mosquito larvae must live in still water for five or more days to complete their growth before changing into adult mosquitoes capable of transmitting disease. Effective ways to prevent your home from becoming a mosquito breeding site include:

- Properly dispose of items that hold water such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or discarded tires.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools and canoes when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim tall grass, weeds and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Plug tree holes.

The State does not recommend individual application of larvicides—chemicals that kill mosquito larvae—to standing bodies of water on your property. Application of larvicides is a complex, expensive technique that is ineffective unless carried out as part of a comprehensive, integrated mosquito control program. In addition, a DNR permit is required to apply larvicides to any body of water belonging to the state (i.e. ponds, lakes, rivers). To apply for the necessary permit, contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Below are effective steps to protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- Make sure window and door screens are in good condition to prevent mosquito entry.
- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Avoid shaded areas where mosquitoes may be resting.
- Wear pants and long sleeves shirts when outdoors. Light clothing may reduce the attraction of mosquito and loose fitting clothing may help prevent mosquitoes from biting through to the skin.
- Apply insect repellent to skin and clothing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using products that contain active ingredients approved and registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For information about mosquito control or WNV infection and surveillance visit the Department of Health and Family Services <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/>, Department of Natural Resources <http://www.dnr.wi.gov/> or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>

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