

Prior to the turn of the 21st century, the bite of the mosquito was dreaded primarily because of the discomfort of the welts and intense itching which can last from a few minutes to a few days depending on your skin's sensitivity. Over the last two decades however, a simple mosquito bite has become a feared occurrence due to the spread of the Zika and West Nile viruses.

Your best defense against contracting one of these viruses is avoiding mosquitoes altogether. The following is a compilation of suggestions from the Center for Disease Control to ensure your exposure to one of these viruses is minimal.

Because both Zika and West Nile viruses are transmitted through the bite of the mosquito, the best method to control the illnesses is to avoid mosquitoes altogether.

For adults:

- 1) Use insect repellent when working or playing outdoors. A formula containing DEET is effective in the southern United States and is fairly easy to find.
- 2) Reapply as needed if swimming or sweating freely. Mosquitoes live near bodies of natural water-lakes, ponds, streams-so extra awareness is needed when fishing or swimming in natural waters or when camping nearby.
- 3) If using a sunscreen, apply sunscreen first, then the spray repellent.
- 4) Be vigilant in preventing standing water in buckets, planters, birdbaths, trashcans, toys, ect in your yard, Mosquitoes lay eggs in still, stagnant water.

For children:

- 1) Do not use repellent on babies younger than 2 months. Use mosquito netting over strollers and carriers if a baby is outdoors.
- 2) Spray repellent on your hands and then apply to a child's face, avoiding the mouth and eyes. *Never* spray repellent into a child's face. Also, do not apply repellent to a child's hands as they may put their hands in their mouths and repellent should not be ingested.
- 3) Arms and legs should be covered, weather permitting.
- 4) While some natural repellents may have some effectiveness in repelling mosquitoes, babies and children should always be treated with EPA-registered formulas.

Controlling mosquitoes inside your home:

- 1) Install or repair window and door screens. Don't leave doors open.
- 2) Use of indoor insect spray is a temporary fix. You will need to reapply according to instructions, particularly in dark, humid areas including under the sink, in the laundry room, in closets and under furniture.