

Mosquitoes and Disease

Mosquitoes are often thought of as pests. But sometimes they can also spread diseases.

This sheet tells you about the diseases that mosquitoes can spread in New York. There are no vaccines or shots to prevent these diseases. But you can take steps to prevent mosquito bites.

Zika Virus

- Many people have been getting Zika virus in the past year in warmer areas.
- Mosquitoes in New York do not carry Zika virus. But you can get Zika virus from a mosquito if you visit or live somewhere warm, like Central America, South America, or the Caribbean.
- Zika virus is usually not serious. But it can cause severe birth defects (serious health problems) if someone gets it while they are pregnant.
- If you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant, talk to your doctor about Zika virus.

West Nile Virus

- West Nile Virus is usually not serious. Most people only have a mild fever, headache, body aches, or a rash if they get West Nile Virus.
- In rare cases, West Nile Virus can lead to brain damage or problems in the spinal cord.



How can I prevent mosquito bites?

When you are at home:



- Make sure all of your windows and doors have screens.
- Don't leave standing water outside your home (in pots, birdbaths, or small ponds).
- Stay inside at sunrise, sunset, and early in the evening. This is when mosquitoes are most active.

When you are outside:



- Use bug spray with less than 30% DEET when you are outside. Follow the directions on the bug spray when you use it.
 - You may also use picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus on your skin.
 - You can use permethrin on clothes, shoes, and camping gear. Don't put permethrin on your skin.
- Wear long pants and long sleeves.



To learn more, talk to your CHN doctor or visit www.health.ny.gov.