

# DHHS Recommends Continued Mosquito Precautions to Prevent Illness

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State health officials are encouraging residents and visitors to take precautions to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses this fall.

"In North Carolina, mosquito-transmitted diseases can happen through October," said Dr. Zack Moore, State Epidemiologist. "Although most mosquitoes produced after hurricanes do not transmit diseases, heavy rains from Hurricane Dorian have filled containers and tree holes around homes in some areas, possibly creating more habitat for mosquitoes that can also carry infectious viruses."

West Nile virus is the most common virus spread by mosquitoes in the continental United States. In North Carolina, La Crosse encephalitis virus is the most common virus spread by mosquitoes. People can also get sick from eastern equine encephalitis virus, though infections are very uncommon in North Carolina. In rare cases, mosquito-borne viruses can cause severe disease or even be deadly.

There are no vaccines licensed for use in humans against mosquito-borne viruses that may be acquired in North Carolina, and no specific medications to cure them once a person is infected by a mosquito, so the first line of defense is to protect yourself against mosquito bites any time you are outside by taking the following actions:

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants while outdoors.

- Use mosquito repellent that contains DEET or other EPA approved ingredients when outside; use caution when applying to children and always follow the instructions on the label.
- Dress children in clothing that covers their arms and legs.
- Reapply insect repellent as directed; if you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

Additionally, take the following precautions to limit standing water and other mosquito breeding sites in the environment around your home:

- Drill holes in recycling containers, toys, or any outdoor items that can hold unwanted water.
- Clear roof gutters of debris.
- Dispose of tires, or keep them under cover so water cannot collect in them.
- Repair screened windows and doors, making sure they fit tightly.

- Plug or fill tree holes — water in tree holes is the primary habitat for the mosquito that transmits La Crosse encephalitis.

More information on the prevention of mosquito bites is available on the [Division of Public Health's website](#) and [www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you](http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you).