



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Dear HOA Representative:

April showers bring May flowers and they also bring mosquitoes. As you prepare for the warm weather ahead, the Fairfax County Health Department reminds you that mosquitoes and the diseases they carry are always a concern this time of year. Zika virus was detected for the first time in North America in 2016 and the virus can cause serious birth defects and other problems with pregnancies. While the virus has not been found in mosquitoes in Northern Virginia, it poses a risk for those who travel to areas where Zika is active and return home infected with the virus.

To minimize that risk, it is important that residents remain vigilant about controlling mosquitoes around their homes and protecting themselves from their bites by doing the following:

Control mosquitoes where you live:

- **Eliminate standing water.** The most effective way to control the mosquitoes which can spread Zika virus is to tip and toss standing water each week from artificial containers like tires, buckets, flower pots, corrugated drain pipes, tarps, etc. Discard containers or turn them over. Mosquitoes can breed in as little as a teaspoon of water.
- **Treat standing water with a larvicide if it cannot be eliminated.** If you cannot get rid of the water, treat it with a mosquito-specific, environmentally-friendly product such as Mosquito Dunks®, which are available at hardware stores and garden centers. Follow label instructions when applying.
- **If mosquitoes are biting, consider treating your yard with an insecticide.** When used according to label instructions, an insecticide can help control biting mosquitoes. Pay attention to areas where they hide, such as dense vegetation and ground cover.
- **Organize a neighborhood clean-up.** Get rid of litter and debris, discard old tires and manage vegetation that mosquitoes may be using as hiding places.

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- **Wear an EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535.** Insect repellent is safe and effective for children and pregnant women, too. Always apply according to label instructions. If using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and then repellent.
- **Dress to protect.** Cover exposed skin by wearing loose-fitting, light-colored long-sleeved shirts and pants. For extra protection, treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Never apply permethrin on skin and always follow label instructions.
- **Keep mosquitoes out of your home.** Keep doors and windows closed. Make sure screens are in good repair. Use air-conditioning when available.

Please consider sharing this information with your HOA members or including in your next newsletter. Enclosed is a copy of our Zika fact sheet. More information can be found on our website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd).

**A representative from the Health Department is available upon request to attend your next association meeting to give a brief overview of Zika and mosquito control. To schedule a presentation, please contact us at 703-246-8428 or email to [HDzika@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:HDzika@fairfaxcounty.gov).**

Thank you for your attention to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

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# ZIKA: What you need to know.

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ZIKA

- **Zika is a viral disease spread to people mostly through the bite of an infected mosquito.** It is transmitted primarily by the yellow fever mosquito (Aedes aegypti). The Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus), which is common in Northern Virginia, can also spread the virus. These are both aggressive, daytime-biting mosquitoes.
- **There is a risk of Zika being imported into Virginia and being transmitted by local mosquitoes.**
- Zika can be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her partners even if the infected person does not have symptoms.
- Zika may be transmitted through blood transfusions.
- Zika can pass from a pregnant woman to her fetus.
- **Infection with Zika during pregnancy can cause birth defects in babies, including microcephaly** (a condition in which a baby's head is smaller than expected).
- **Pregnant women should not travel to areas with active Zika transmission.**
- **There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.**
- Based on information about similar infections, once a person has been infected with Zika, he or she is likely to be protected from future Zika virus infections.
- Local mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission has been reported in the continental United States.

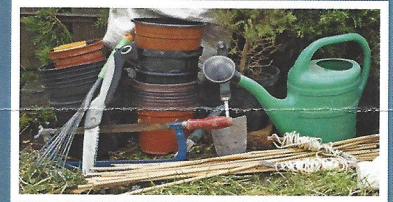


(Aedes albopictus, or Asian tiger mosquito, is common in Northern Virginia.)

## DO YOUR PART FROM THE START: Prevent & Protect Against Mosquito Bites!

### Control Mosquitoes in Your Yard

- Aedes mosquitoes lay eggs in containers. **To prevent mosquitoes in your yard, eliminate standing water weekly.** Tip and toss water from containers like tires, buckets, flower pots, drain pipes, tarps, bird baths, toys, etc. Scrub the inside of containers, discard them or place indoors.
- If you cannot dump water from a container, **treat it with a larvicide** like *Bacillus thuringiensis var. israelensis* (follow label instructions).
- If mosquitoes are biting, **use insecticides in your yard** to control them. Treat areas where they rest, such as dense vegetation or ground cover (follow label instructions).



### Prevent Mosquito Bites

- **Use EPA-registered insect repellents** containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 (follow label instructions).
- **Cover exposed skin.** Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- **Treat clothing with permethrin.** Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. Never apply permethrin to skin (follow label instructions).
- **Keep window and door screens in good repair** to keep mosquitoes out.

## SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA

Most people with Zika won't even know they have it. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week.

**The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other symptoms include muscle pain and headache.** If you suspect you may be infected with Zika, contact your medical practitioner, especially if pregnant. Even if you do not feel sick, take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks by staying indoors or wearing protective clothing and insect repellent. This will help prevent mosquitoes from biting you and spreading the virus to others in the community.

## RESOURCES

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/zika-virus.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/zika-virus.htm)  
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/zika/>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

Fairfax County Health Department

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