

## Block the Buzzing, Bites and Bumps

A warm wet spring and summer can be difficult if outdoor fun is interrupted by the irritating buzz of mosquitoes. Their bites not only can create bumps that are itchy. They can also carry the risk for disease. The National Institute of Health has provided funds for scientists to work to find a better way to diagnose treat and prevent mosquito-borne illnesses. We can all take steps to avoid getting bit by those pesky mosquitoes.

Most mosquito bites are harmless. The bumps may last a day or two and be irritating. But if the mosquito is carrying certain germs such as viruses or parasites, these pathogens may enter your blood and make you sick. Most diseases are mild, but some diseases can make people very sick or even cause death.

Some of the diseases and viruses spread by mosquito bites include West Nile; dengue one of the most common worldwide; Yellow fever and Japanese encephalitis; Zika which is closely related to West Nile and dengue.

The infections and diseases spread by mosquitoes can be serious. Mosquito related illnesses kill about 725,000 people worldwide each year. That is overwhelming more than the 50,000 killed by snakes and only 10 who are killed by sharks worldwide.

To avoid mosquito bites here are some recommendations from the National Institutes of Health:

- **Use insect repellents.** Products containing DEET, picaridin, lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol or IR3535 can be applied to skin. Follow label instructions.
- **Cover up.** When outside, wear long sleeves, pants and socks. Mosquitoes may bite through thin fabric, so spray thing clothes with an EPA registered repellent like permethrin. Don't apply permethrin directly on to skin.
- **Mosquito-proof your home.** Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep insects out. Use air conditioning if you have it.
- **Get rid of mosquito breeding sites.** Empty standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes and bird baths on a regular basis.