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### **Mosquito and Tick Season Begins**

Summit County Public Health: Mosquito and tick season has officially begun in Summit County and Summit County Public Health would like to remind residents to take every precaution to eliminate the risk for mosquito bites that can carry West Nile virus and Zika virus and tick bites that can transmit Lyme disease. In Ohio ticks are most active from April through September and mosquitoes are most active from May through October according to the Ohio Department of Health.

#### **Mosquitoes**

Summit County has the type of mosquitoes that transmits West Nile virus. The primary mosquito species that transmits Zika virus is not known to be established in Summit County. However, a “cousin” of the mosquito that may transmit Zika virus is found in Ohio.

“It is very important to remember that there are simple precautions you can take while traveling and at home to help prevent mosquito borne diseases”, said Sara Cochran, Mosquito Program Supervisor, Summit County Public Health.

Mosquitoes can be indoors or outdoors and some species will bite during the day and others bite at dusk and dawn. Tips to avoid to protect yourself from mosquitos:

- Wear light colored long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Make sure screens in windows or doors are in good repair.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and are not able to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents. All EPA-registered insect repellents are evaluated for effectiveness.
  - Always follow the product label instructions
  - Reapply insect repellent as directed.
  - Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.



- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen before applying insect repellent.

It is important to eliminate possible mosquito breeding grounds around your home to help protect yourself:

- Get rid of standing water around your property.
- Empty containers that may hold water such as buckets, flower pots and birdbaths.
- Make sure all gutters are clean.
- Keep children's wading pools empty and on their side when not in use.

### **Ticks**

It is important for residents to take precautions to prevent the spread of tick borne diseases. Here are some tips to help you avoid tick bites:

- Avoid wooded areas with high grass and brush, stay in the middle of trails.
- Use EPA – registered tick repellent and follow the directions on the label.
- Wear long pants and tuck them into your socks.
- Wear light colored clothing; it makes it easier to see ticks.
- Perform tick checks, including the places ticks like to hide: your hair, under your arms, behind the knees and in your belly button.
- Check your pets and kids after they have been outside in areas where ticks may live.

If you find a tick on you or your family follow these steps to remove the tick:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
- Pull upwards with even pressure. **DO NOT** twist or jerk the tick, which can cause the mouth parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens remove the mouth parts with tweezers.
- After the tick is removed, clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, or soap and water.



- Before disposing of the tick it is best to have the tick identified or identify it yourself. If you cannot identify it yourself you can call the health department at 330-926-5600 for the steps on how you can have the tick identified by SCPH.
- Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed container/bag, wrapping it tightly in tape or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.
- If you remove a tick from your body, please watch for fever, rash, muscle or joint pain or other symptoms. If you experience any of these symptoms contact your healthcare provider.

For more information/resources on the prevention of tick and mosquito borne diseases go to <https://www.scph.org/animal-and-pest-control>, <https://odh.ohio.gov/>, <https://www.cdc.gov/vector-borne-diseases>.

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