
CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 15, 2016

Contact: DeShay Oliver, PIO
Cleveland County Health Department
980-484-5199
Deshay.oliver@clevelandcounty.com

Tip and Toss: 8 Steps to Prevent Mosquito and Tick Bites This Summer

(Shelby, NC) – “Tip and Toss” is the message officials are sharing during April’s Tick and Mosquito Borne Disease Awareness Month, encouraging individuals to protect themselves by eliminating mosquito breeding areas and taking preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of mosquito and tick bites.

Tick- and mosquito-borne infections are common in North Carolina. More than 790 cases of domestically acquired and travel-associated tick- and mosquito-borne diseases were reported in 2015, including Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease, LaCrosse encephalitis and West Nile virus. The first travel-associated case of Zika virus in North Carolina was reported in February 2016. These diseases are diagnosed across the state and can be acquired at any time of year, though the majority of infections occur from June to September.

In proclaiming April as Tick and Mosquito Awareness Month in North Carolina, Governor Pat McCrory noted that ticks and mosquitoes are a natural part of our environment, so protective measures are the best way to avoid illnesses associated with them.

"Ticks and mosquitoes are very common in our state, and they can carry bacteria and viruses that cause serious infections," said State Public Health Veterinarian, Carl Williams, DVM. "The good news is that many of these infections can be prevented by following some basic control measures."

Those measures include reducing habitat for the pests and reducing exposure to them.

Tip and Toss:

1. Reduce mosquito breeding opportunities by emptying standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires and birdbaths at least weekly.
2. Be sure to tightly secure screens on all openings on rain barrels used for water conservation.
3. Clean up any trash or leaves that may be around your home or in rain gutters.

Reduce exposure and use preventive measures:

4. Avoid tick habitats, which include wooded, grassy or brushy areas.
5. Use tick and mosquito repellent that contains DEET (or equivalent) on exposed skin and wear clothing treated with permethrin, a synthetic insecticide used against disease-carrying insects.
6. If you find a tick attached to your body, carefully remove it by grasping the tick with fine-tipped tweezers as close as possible to your skin and apply a steady gentle pull until it releases.
7. Reduce tick habitat on your property by mowing frequently and keeping your yard clear of old furniture and debris.
8. Mosquito-proof your home by installing or repairing screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside, and use air conditioning if you have it.

For more information on preventing tick- and mosquito-borne illnesses, visit <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/vector.html>.

For information on Zika virus, visit: <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/zika/>

To read Governor McCrory's proclamation, visit <http://governor.nc.gov/document/tick-and-mosquito-awareness-month-1>.

###