



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Mosquito and Tick Vector Awareness in Kalamazoo County

KALAMAZOO, MI — As Michigan weather begins to transition into spring, Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department's Environmental Health Division urges residents to take precautions against mosquito and tick bites when going outdoors. Michigan is known to have several mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus (WNV), Jamestown Canyon virus, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Additionally, ticks are known carriers of Lyme disease.

It only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to transmit a virus. There are many measures you can take to best protect yourself from mosquito-borne viruses such as ensuring your yard is not a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Dump any standing water that may accumulate in places like birdbaths, flowerpots, buckets, or old tires. Remove algae from ponds as mosquito larvae will feed on it. To keep mosquitos out of your house, repair any ripped or torn window screens and keep windows, screens and doors shut. Mosquitos are also attracted to light, so minimize outdoor lighting around your house after dark. While outdoors, wear tall socks, loose fitting pants, and long sleeves (light colored clothing helps as well).

"As in past years, Kalamazoo County Environmental Health is planning mosquito and tick surveillance beginning in May, in order to notify citizens on steps they can take to reduce disease transmission this summer," says Lucus Pols, Environmental Health Division Chief.

Ticks can be found in high grass, brush, and fallen leaves. Some precautions you can take include removing ticks from clothing before coming indoors and after coming indoors perform a tick check, including armpits, scalp, and groin. For both ticks and mosquitos, use insect repellent with DEET (40%) or other repellents registered by the EPA on skin and treat clothing with permethrin to repel biting insects (always follow label directions). Cover strollers and baby carriers with mosquito netting. In addition, limit the time you spend outdoors during dusk and dawn, the prime feeding times for mosquitos. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.CDC.gov/mosquitoes and www.CDC.gov/ticks

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