

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Holiday Weekend is Excellent Time to Think About Mosquitoes

GRAND RAPIDS – Finally, summer. No more snow, no more ice. The sounds of kids playing and the ice cream truck fill the air. But as the birds sing there is another sound of summer that is not so pleasant. It is the buzz of the mosquito. What many people do not realize is that the mosquito is more than an inconvenience. The mosquito represents a potential health risk. The good news is you can do something to lower the population of mosquitoes and protect yourself at the same time.

Recently the Zika Virus has been prevalent in the news. The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) believes that here in Kent County there is very little risk of being bitten by a Zika infected mosquito. But mosquitoes in Michigan can spread diseases including West Nile Virus.

KCHD is urging people to take a look around their yards and neighborhoods to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds. Mosquitoes will breed just about any place that there is standing water. Birdbaths, puddles, old tires, toys can all be prime targets for mosquito breeding. Many people underestimate the importance of emptying these sources. A single bottle cap is enough water for mosquitoes to breed.

The best way to avoid mosquito borne illness is to avoid being bit. You can, for example, wear long sleeves or stay indoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitos are most active. When using repellants the Kent County Health Department recommends using one that contains DEET and always following the manufacturer's directions on the label. There is much more information about West Nile virus available at https://www.accesskent.com/Health/CommDisease/pdfs/westnile_qa.pdf

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.