



Mosquito-borne diseases – the facts!

- Not all mosquitoes carry diseases. Most mosquitoes are just a nuisance.
- You can only catch mosquito-borne diseases from the bite of an infected mosquito. You cannot catch them from an infected person or animal.
- The best protection from mosquito-borne diseases is to avoid mosquito bites.
- Mosquito-borne diseases typically occur around inland waterways and coastal regions.
- Mosquitoes need water to breed. Heavy rains and flooding can bring more mosquitoes.

Mosquito-borne diseases in Victoria

Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus disease

The symptoms for Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus diseases are similar. Both can cause joint swelling and pain, fatigue and muscle aches. Many people also develop a rash and some may also experience a fever. Everyone recovers, although some people can have symptoms on and off for a year or more.

Murray Valley Encephalitis Virus disease

Murray Valley Encephalitis Virus (MVEV) disease is rare but can be very serious. As with other forms of encephalitis (brain infection), it can cause swelling of the brain, which can lead to brain damage or death.

Most people who get the virus show no symptoms at all. For those that do, it can take around seven to 28 days between getting bitten and becoming sick. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache, seizure (especially in young children), neck stiffness, drowsiness and confusion. In severe cases, delirium and coma can follow.

If you have any health concerns see your doctor or phone NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24.

For more information contact your local council or visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please phone 1300 651 160 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required.

To order copies of this brochure email infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au.

Also available as a PDF on the internet at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au.

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BEAT
THE BITE!

Protect yourself
and your family from
mosquito-borne diseases



For more information visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



We love getting outdoors while the weather is warm. The problem is - so do the mozzies. They're not just annoying; some mosquitoes can transmit serious diseases.

There are simple ways you can **Beat the bite!** and protect yourself and your family.



Protect yourself

Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing outdoors

- Mosquitoes are more attracted to dark colours. They can also bite through tight-fitting clothes like leggings.

Use effective mosquito repellents on exposed skin

- Creams and gels containing DEET or picaridin are considered most effective.
- Reapply repellents as per the product label or after swimming, showering or heavy sweating.

Limit outdoor activity when mozzies are about

- Dusk and dawn are when mosquitoes are more active, but some will also bite during the day.

Protect babies and small children

Use mosquito repellents safely

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and only use mosquito repellents sparingly.
- In young children, mosquito repellents are safest if rubbed or sprayed on clothing rather than skin. Don't spray on the skin of children under the age of one.
- When selecting a repellent to use on children or babies, choose one with no more than 10 per cent DEET or picaridin.

Cover up babies and small children

- Dress babies and small children to cover as much skin as possible. Loose-fitting clothes or muslin wraps are good in the heat and keep the mozzies off.
- Use insect nets over prams and cots.
- If a child is playing outside and mosquitoes are about, use repellents as above.
- Consult your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

Mozzie-proof your holiday

Ensure your accommodation is mozzie-proof

- Check your tent is properly fitted with mosquito netting.
- If you're in a caravan, ensure there are flywire screens on the windows and doors.

Think mozzies when you are packing

- Check you've packed plenty of mosquito repellent containing DEET or picaridin.
- Take long, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes for all the family, including the kids.
- Take some mosquito coils or citronella candles – they can be effective in small outdoor areas.



**BEAT
THE
BITE!**

Mozzie-proof your home

Keep 'em out!

- Maintain flywire screens on windows and doors.
- If you don't have screens, sleep under mosquito nets treated with insecticides (eg. synthetic pyrethroids).
- Use 'knockdown' sprays and plug-in vaporising devices.
- The use of ceiling or floor fans can reduce mozzies.

Remove stagnant water where mozzies breed

- Discard unused tins, tyres and similar rubbish, clean gutters and drains regularly and mend leaking taps.
- Change pets' drinking water and the water in vases, pot plants and bird baths at least once a week.
- Put sand around the base of pot plants.
- Keep swimming pools chlorinated, salted or empty if not in use.
- Keep fishponds stocked. Fish eat the mozzie larvae.

Check your rainwater tank or water storage devices

- Make sure that any tops, lids, covers and inlet pipes are close-fitting.
- Fit removable screen mesh to the outlet end of overflow pipes and to all inlets.
- Make sure any water collection containers have secure lids or screens.

