



Meadowlark Extension District Weekly Agent News Articles

Fenceline

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Zika Virus

With all the rain, it's no wonder there are a lot of mosquitoes. The Zika virus is mosquito transmitted and has now been reported in Shawnee County. The primary means of transmission is to get bit by the infected female Aedes mosquitoes. The primary vector is the yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*.

Zika was first isolated in 1947 in Uganda's Zika Forest in Africa, where it was discovered in a rhesus monkey. The virus remained low key, until an outbreak in 2007 in Micronesia. Scientist believe the virus mutated into an increased virulence strain. It has been spreading quickly through the Pacific Islands and in 2015 it appeared in South America.

Most humans infected with Zika have very mild or no symptoms. A small number of people (1 in 5) develop mild symptoms that include, fever, joint pain, conjunctivitis and a body rash. Symptoms typically occur 2 to 7 days following the bite, from an infected mosquito. In some, more severe symptoms may occur, like paralysis. Researchers are investigating the link between the Zika virus and birth defects including microcephaly.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are tracking the distribution of the virus and recommending some people, including pregnant women refrain from traveling to areas where the virus is present.

Protect yourself from bites! Make sure your window and door screens are "bug tight". Install weather stripping to keep mosquitoes from entering around loose fitting doors and windows. Use the correct type of lights outside. Incandescent lights attract mosquitoes, where fluorescent lights neither attract nor repel mosquitoes.

Aedes species associated with Zika are considered "day" biters so protect yourself whenever you are outside. Read the label of insect repellents so that you are applying them correctly. Follow all the directions on the insect repellent label.

Prevent and control! Make sure any refuse you have on your property, that can hold water, like old tires, cans etc., are dumped of rain water. It takes less than one cup of water, for the development of mosquitoes.

Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers, unclog your rain gutters every year. Clean out bird baths and ornamental pools and unused swimming pools. Pools should be cleaned and chlorinated when not in use. Alter the landscape of your property to eliminate standing water, and puddle of water can become a mosquito breeding ground.

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