

WINNING THE BUG WAR

KEEPING MOSQUITOES AT BAY

Simple steps by homeowners can minimize mosquitoes

The state Department of Health recommends the following simple actions to keep mosquito populations down around homes. Townships may want to share these tips with their residents.

- Maintain good screens on windows and doors to keep infected mosquitoes out.
- Regularly empty any outside containers or drill drainage holes in their bottoms.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Clean clogged roof gutters that may allow the pooling of rain water.
- Do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths or ornamental ponds.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and remove standing water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that routinely collects on the property.
- Remove discarded tires from the property; they make an excellent larva habitat.
- For standing water that can't be eliminated, purchase *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), or *Bacillus sphaericus* (Bsp) tablets at any lawn and garden store. Added to standing water, the bacteria will infect and kill any mosquito larvae present without harming people, pets, aquatic life, or plants.



Mosquito prevention techniques include (clockwise from top left): Eliminating containers that collect water, including waste tires and flowerpots; using insect repellent; installing window screens; and spraying with insecticides.

PERSONAL TICK PROTECTION

Prevent tick bites with simple steps

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests the following practices to prevent being bitten by ticks, which can transmit disease. Townships should share these tips with their residents.

Before you go outdoors

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.
- **Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin.** Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing, and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
- **Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents** containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. EPA's helpful search tool (epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you) can help you find the product that best suits your needs. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old.
- **Avoid contact with ticks.** Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter and walk in the center of trails.

After you come indoors

- **Check your clothing for ticks.** Ticks may be carried into the house on clothing; remove any that you find. Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing. If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed. If the clothes require washing first, use hot water. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.
- **Examine gear and pets.** Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets and attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day-packs.
- **Shower soon after being outdoors.** Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting Lyme disease and may be effective in mitigating the risk of other tick-borne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks, and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.
- **Check your body for ticks.** Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, including your own backyard. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check these parts of your body and your child's body for ticks:
 - under the arms;
 - in and around the ears;
 - inside the belly button;
 - at the back of the knees;
 - in and around the hair;
 - between the legs; and
 - around the waist.



Once indoors, check your body for ticks and promptly remove any you find.

TICK-FREE LANDSCAPING

Follow these tips to create tick-free yards and play areas

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest the following actions to minimize tick activity in yards. Townships can adapt them for parks and other public spaces and educate homeowners on how to minimize ticks on their property.

- Clear tall grasses and brush around structures and at the edge of mown areas.
- Place a 3-foot-wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment. This will restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- Cut the grass frequently and keep leaves raked.
- Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from lawn edges and trees. Place them in a sunny location if possible.
- Remove old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.



Check out these resources to learn more about vector-borne diseases

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
 - Lyme disease — cdc.gov/lyme
 - West Nile virus — cdc.gov/westnile
- Pa. Department of Environmental Protection:
 - West Nile virus — depgis.state.pa.us/WNV/Index.html
- Penn State Extension:
 - Lyme disease — extension.psu.edu/lyme-disease
 - West Nile virus — extension.psu.edu/west-nile-virus