



INFO

From our mosquito experts

WHAT IS THE *Aedes aegypti* MOSQUITO?

There are many species of mosquitoes. Only the *Aedes aegypti* species of mosquito has been shown to transmit the Zika virus, although experts suspect that the species *Aedes albopictus* may also be capable of transmitting the virus.

Aedes aegypti is a small, dark mosquito with white markings and banded legs. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is responsible for transmitting the Zika virus, dengue virus, chikungunya virus and yellow fever virus in certain parts of the world.

What's the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito's lifecycle?

An adult female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito may lay 100 to 200 eggs per batch. She can produce up to 5 batches during her lifetime, which is usually two weeks to one month.

She lays the eggs in standing water. This often includes water around the home, such as in gutters, containers, pots, tree holes and old tires. For this reason, eliminating standing water twice a week around the home may reduce mosquito populations.

When the eggs hatch, the larvae live for roughly four days on materials in the water, such as algae. Then the larvae enter a pupal stage for a couple of days, during which they do not eat. They emerge as an adult flying mosquito.

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes don't travel all that far during their lifetimes, probably 400 meters or less.

Why do they bite?

Only female mosquitoes bite. They use blood as a source of protein for their eggs, and they lay their eggs after a meal of blood.

Adult *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes typically actively bite during the day, most particularly in the early morning and at dusk. They are attracted to people primarily through the carbon dioxide in people's breath.



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Other factors, such as clothing color and skin smell (as in perspiration) may also influence biting behaviors. Lighter clothing colors are considered less attractive to mosquitoes.

How does the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito transmit viruses?

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito picks up a virus, such as Zika, dengue or others, when it bites an infected individual. If there are no infected individuals for the mosquito to bite, it cannot spread the Zika virus because it is not infected itself.

If the mosquito bites someone who is infected with the Zika virus, it picks up the virus from that infected person. It takes five to seven days for the virus to replicate within the now-infected mosquito. During this time, the virus passes to the mosquito's salivary glands.

From these glands, the mosquito passes the virus from its saliva onto the person it is biting, potentially creating a newly-infected person. A single infected mosquito may be capable of infecting several people.