



*To serve, protect
and promote
a healthy community for all.*

Can Mosquitoes Transmit COVID-19?

With Summer weather and COVID-19 guidance in place, people are spending more time outside and at socially distanced outdoor gatherings, such as activities in parks with family and friends or backyard movie nights with neighbors. So, as we head outside, remember that we're heading out into peak mosquito and tick season.

As we know, these bloodsuckers transmit diseases such as West Nile, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Lyme Disease and Zika, so it's a no-brainer to ask, "do mosquitoes carry the coronavirus and can they transmit it to humans?" Fortunately, the World Health Organization says there is no information or evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transmitted through mosquito bites. So that's the good news, but we must remember to avoid mosquito bites to prevent these other diseases.

Getting out in nature, whether in the woods or in your back yard, has been a tremendous relief from the stay home orders we've been practicing. But with tick and mosquito season here, precautions beyond a face mask are needed. The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) recommends practicing these preventative measures:

- Wearing a mosquito repellent that contains 10 – 35% DEET.
- Wearing light colored, loose fitting clothing. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Staying indoors during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Removing or refreshing water in bird baths, children's wading pools, water bowls for your pets.
- Emptying other small containers that can collect standing water.
- Keeping your lawn and shrubs trimmed.



About 20% of people who are infected with West Nile may notice symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains and fatigue. People who are already sick from mosquito-borne viruses have weakened immunities, which could make it much worse if they caught COVID-19. Some of these symptoms are similar for COVID-19, which can make determining the cause difficult.

You may be thinking that surveillance and testing of mosquitoes has been suspended in order to devote public health resources to the pandemic. But not the case in Kent County. Our Environmental Health staff have been out trapping and testing pools of mosquito remains weekly. Recently, West Nile was found in zip code areas of 49504 and 49525.

"Discovering these mosquitoes should serve as a reminder to everyone who lives in West Michigan that West Nile Virus season is upon us," says Brendan Earl, Supervising Sanitarian at KCHD. "It is important for people to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites as much as possible."

Since there is no vaccine or cure for mosquito-borne diseases, the best treatment is prevention.

More information about prevention can be found here:

<https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Environmental/vector.htm>