



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Human Services

[Sue Lynn Ledford](#), Public Health Division Director, 919-250-1474

[Elizabeth Brandt](#), Communications Specialist, 919-623-4763

[Communications Office After Hours](#)

wakegov.com/news

Date: May 26, 2016

Wake County Reminds Residents to be Mosquito Safe

Adopting proactive prevention techniques is important as summer approaches

Memorial Day, a holiday many consider the unofficial start of summer, is just around the corner, offering the perfect opportunity to remind Wake County residents to protect themselves from mosquitoes. Aside from being itchy and annoying, the bite of an infected female mosquito can lead to the spread of disease.

It is important for residents to start implementing prevention tactics now to help control the mosquito population.

“Zika has not yet been detected in mosquitos in the United States, but that could change at any point in the future,” said Dr. Sue Lynn Ledford, Public Health Division director. “It’s our job to ensure we’re prepared and ready for that possibility, which is why we’re asking residents to be proactive and protect themselves from mosquitos as summer approaches and they spend more time outdoors.”

All Wake County residents play a role in this effort. Here are several steps they should take to protect themselves, their families and the community:

- **Cover and repel** to keep mosquitoes from biting you. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks, if possible. Apply mosquito repellent to exposed skin, as directed. Consider treating clothing with permethrin insect repellent.
- **Remove items that collect water** to eliminate places where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover or throw out any items that can hold water like tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpot saucers or trash containers.
- **Keep mosquitoes out of your home.** Keep windows and doors shut, and use air conditioning when possible. Use, install, or repair window and door screens.

Wake County started preparing several months ago for the possibility of Zika in the county. Our Public Health Division staff is in constant contact with state and federal

partners to ensure they have the latest information about the virus. Staff also regularly share information with local physicians and educate them on the kinds of questions to ask patients to help detect any potential cases.

While Zika is generally a mild illness, children born to women who were infected with the virus during pregnancy may have a higher chance of birth defects. Zika can be spread when an infected man has sex with his partners. Mosquito bites are the main way that Zika has spread outside the continental United States.

Only one out of every five people infected with Zika will show symptoms. Zika's symptoms typically appear within two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Common symptoms include fever, red eyes, joint pains and rash. Other symptoms may include headache or muscle pain.

For additional information about Zika, visit the Wake County Public Health Division's [mosquito prevention webpage](#) or cdc.gov/zika.

###