

Script – Broadcast – The buzz on mosquitoes

INTRO

Perhaps no one is happier to see the arrival of summer than those pesky mosquitoes that invade our space over the next three months.

Seemingly, they're everywhere. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are 3,700 types of mosquitoes around the world, wreaking havoc. They'll try to ruin your picnic, they love it when you relax in the backyard and they feast on anything that's happening near a body of water.

According to the CDC, only female mosquitoes bite people and animals to get a blood meal, which they need to produce eggs. Adult mosquitoes live for about two to four weeks, depending on the species, humidity and temperature.

But why do some people tend to be mosquito magnets while others get off scot-free? There are plenty of reasons, including blood type (most mosquitoes like Type O), body heat (female mosquitoes detect heat) and even diet (eating sweet, salty or spicy foods can draw mosquitoes). One [study](#) even suggests mosquitoes are attracted to people who drink beer, although experts aren't sure why.

(((SOS)))

Breanne Gendron, Nurse Practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"Mosquitoes bite us for their nutrition, and some people are more apt to be bitten than others. Mosquitoes are drawn to dark colors. But then once they get closer to you, they smell carbon dioxide and lactic acid that lives in our bodies. And some people have a higher level of those things than others." (:17)

VO

Gendron says most mosquito bites don't require medical attention and only last a few days. However, certain mosquitoes can carry serious diseases. West Nile virus is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the United States, reports the CDC. While many people with West Nile don't exhibit any symptoms, others can develop fevers, body aches and fatigue. In the Midwest, the first mosquito-borne West Nile virus cases in 2025 were found in a bird in Michigan's Saginaw County and a mosquito pool in Bay County. In Illinois, the health departments in DuPage and McHenry counties confirmed the first cases of West Nile virus in June of this year.

TAG

As difficult as it may be, try not to scratch that itch. Gendron says it's better to rub a bite. By scratching skin abrasions, bacteria from your fingernails could lead to a secondary bacterial infection. Gendron says at that point, you're just managing the itch. She recommends using over-the-counter medications such as calamine lotion or Benadryl.

Gendron offers a few other helpful tips to get you through the summer months.

- Wear loose, long-sleeved shirts and long pants outdoors, especially between dusk and dawn.
- Always use insect repellent when you're outside. Look for ones with DEET, picaridin or IR3535 on the label.
- Avoid spraying repellent near your face and wash any repellent off before you go to bed.
- Certain plants can help naturally repel mosquitoes with their scents, including lavender, citronella, basil and rosemary.
- Empty standing water from containers around your home, like flowerpots, buckets and birdbaths.