



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Dear HOA Representative:

April showers bring May flowers and they also bring mosquitoes. As you prepare for the warm weather ahead, the Fairfax County Health Department reminds you that mosquitoes and the diseases they carry are always a concern this time of year. Zika virus was detected for the first time in North America in 2016 and the virus can cause serious birth defects and other problems with pregnancies. While the virus has not been found in mosquitoes in Northern Virginia, it poses a risk for those who travel to areas where Zika is active and return home infected with the virus.

To minimize that risk, it is important that residents remain vigilant about controlling mosquitoes around their homes and protecting themselves from their bites by doing the following:

### Control mosquitoes where you live:

- **Eliminate standing water.** The most effective way to control the mosquitoes which can spread Zika virus is to tip and toss standing water each week from artificial containers like tires, buckets, flower pots, corrugated drain pipes, tarps, etc. Discard containers or turn them over. Mosquitoes can breed in as little as a teaspoon of water.
- **Treat standing water with a larvicide if it cannot be eliminated.** If you cannot get rid of the water, treat it with a mosquito-specific, environmentally-friendly product such as Mosquito Dunks®, which are available at hardware stores and garden centers. Follow label instructions when applying.
- **If mosquitoes are biting, consider treating your yard with an insecticide.** When used according to label instructions, an insecticide can help control biting mosquitoes. Pay attention to areas where they hide, such as dense vegetation and ground cover.
- **Organize a neighborhood clean-up.** Get rid of litter and debris, discard old tires and manage vegetation that mosquitoes may be using as hiding places.

### Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- **Wear an EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535.** Insect repellent is safe and effective for children and pregnant women, too. Always apply according to label instructions. If using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and then repellent.
- **Dress to protect.** Cover exposed skin by wearing loose-fitting, light-colored long-sleeved shirts and pants. For extra protection, treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing and gear. Never apply permethrin on skin and always follow label instructions.
- **Keep mosquitoes out of your home.** Keep doors and windows closed. Make sure screens are in good repair. Use air-conditioning when available.

~~Please consider sharing this information with your HOA members or including in your next newsletter. Enclosed is a copy of our Zika fact sheet. More information can be found on our website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd).~~

**A representative from the Health Department is available upon request to attend your next association meeting to give a brief overview of Zika and mosquito control. To schedule a presentation, please contact us at 703-246-8428 or email to [HDzika@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:HDzika@fairfaxcounty.gov).**

Thank you for your attention to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

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