**Protect Yourself**

To help protect against disease carrying mosquitoes, wear clothing that is light colored and protective, covering arms and legs, especially in the late afternoon. Try to wear shoes, socks, long sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Make sure your home window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquito entry. Choose a repellent product that meets your needs for the time you will be outdoors and the amount of mosquito activity. Use repellent products according to directions on the label. Do not spray repellents in a confined space. Do not apply to children's hands or allow them to apply themselves. The most effective repellents contain DEET.

Products containing up to 30 percent DEET are considered safe in routine control of ticks and mosquitoes in adults and children over two months of age. Spray repellents sparingly and only on exposed skin or on top of clothing. Wash treated skin when protection is no longer needed. No adverse effects from DEET use have been reported in pregnant or lactating women.

If your child develops symptoms of fever, severe headache, vomiting, drowsiness or convulsions, get medical attention immediately.

**What about my pets**

Mosquitoes can carry dog heartworm disease which can be fatal to your pet. This disease is common and completely preventable with medication. Your veterinarian can recommend the right preventative program for your dog. You should protect your pet with heartworm medication even if you keep it indoors.

Mosquitoes can also carry eastern equine encephalitis (EEE), a highly fatal disease of horses of all breeds. Each year several horses in Polk County are infected with EEE. There are highly effective vaccines for EEE. Check with your veterinarian for more information.

For more information contact:

Polk County Health Department
100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 180
Balsam Lake WI 54810
715-485-8500
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Not only a nuisance, mosquitoes can carry dangerous diseases such as West Nile Virus and Encephalitis. Control measures are important in reducing the risk of vectorborne disease. Adult mosquitoes frequently rest in grass, shrubbery or other foliage, but never develop there. All mosquitoes need water to complete their life cycle.

Mosquitoes begin developing in March when snows melt and water drains into depressions in wooded areas. Flooded depressions provide suitable habitat for hatching and development, which can occur continually throughout the summer months. Any water left standing for seven to ten days is sufficient to maintain most life cycles.

Most mosquitoes of Wisconsin lay their eggs on damp or organic debris in land depressions or shorelines of marsh areas. Little development occurs in open water or in lakes. Some pest and disease bearing mosquitoes lay their eggs in tree holes, old tires, tin cans or other holding containers. The eggs may hatch within several days or remain unhatched for weeks, months or even years until they are covered with water. Eggs, under proper climatic conditions, when inundated with water, hatch into larvae (wrigglers) which develop into pupa (tumblers). Soon the backs of the pupas split open and adult mosquitoes emerge. Only the female mosquito bites, since she needs blood to develop eggs. The male mosquito feeds on plant juice and does not represent a problem of disease spread. The life span of mosquitoes varies from about four weeks to three to five months depending on the species, and some will produce several hatches in the course of a summer. The flight range for the most common pest mosquito in our area ranges from 5 to 40 miles, although some disease carrying species will only travel a few hundred yards. Control of these species can be as simple as removal of habitat (water holding containers).

CONTROLLING MOSQUITOES

The most effective and economical method of reducing adult mosquitoes over a large area is to prevent emergence from as many breeding areas as possible. Adult mosquitoes, once emerged, disperse over large areas, so it is easier to control the larvae when they are concentrated in the water. While larvae control won’t solve the entire problem (adults from outside the controlled area may fly in), it will go a long way toward making it possible to spend evenings out of doors without the problem of mosquitoes.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Eliminate artificial breeding sites such as tin cans, tires and tree holes, all of which can breed pest and disease carrying mosquitoes.

Rid your yard of breeding sites such as low tree holes (which can be filled and capped with a recommended material such as gypsum wool rock, an insulating material), and water holding containers such as tires, cans and buckets which can produce disease carrying mosquitoes. Once a virus establishes in a breeding site, it can become a source of disease bearing mosquitoes for years.

Empty, remove, cover or turn upside down any receptacle that could hold water to reduce mosquito breeding. Properly discard of unwanted tires and keep wanted tires inside or under cover. Holes can also be drilled in the bottom and sides of old tires to allow water to drain.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Spraying is the first solution most people think of when they’re faced with a mosquito control problem. However, using insecticides to control mosquitoes is time consuming, expensive and not very effective. Ordinarily you won’t want to do it if you have any other option. Spraying is a very temporary solution.