Allegan County Health Department Monitors Mosquitoes, Ticks and Promotes Preventive Actions for Residents

(Allegan, MI) — As temperatures warm up, the Allegan County Health Department (ACHD) encourage residents to take precautions to prevent vector-borne illness or diseases caused by ticks and mosquitoes.

ACHD is once again participating in a Vector-Borne Disease Surveillance and Prevention Program with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Collection of mosquitoes and ticks began May 30, 2020. ACHD provides mosquito and tick monitoring data to the MDHHS surveillance system so our community can learn the vector-borne illness risk in the area.

The main goal of the program is to help identify populations of Aedes species, among other species of mosquitoes that can transmit Zika, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), and other viruses; and deer (blacklegged) ticks that can spread Lyme disease or other pathogens. Mosquito traps are set at a minimum of five locations/week and tick drags are completed at a minimum of two locations across the county. The program also supports educational outreach on mosquito-borne disease prevention, mosquito control, and tick-borne disease prevention.

Diseases spread to people by mosquitoes and ticks include West Nile virus and Lyme disease, which have been found in Allegan County over recent years. Prevention is the best way to protect yourself and your family.

Tick bites can be prevented by:

- Avoiding tick-infested areas and clearing high grass, brush, and leaf litter around your home.
- Using DEET containing insect repellents. (Do not use on children under 2 months of age).
- Wearing light colored, long-sleeved shirts, long-legged pants and closed toe shoes.
- Performing daily tick checks.
- Checking pets for ticks when they have been outside.
- Putting your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.
Mosquito bites can be prevented by:

- Using insect repellents. For children, apply products with less than 30 percent DEET.
- Wearing long sleeves and long pants spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin.
- Emptying standing water from around your home on a regular basis. Standing water can be found in flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths.
- Installing or repairing screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes outside. Use air conditioning if possible.

For more information on these and other diseases that may affect humans or animals, visit [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases). To learn how to remove and submit a tick for identification, call ACHD at (269) 673-5415.

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