



NT Health

Territorians urged to protect themselves against mozzie bites ahead of Easter long weekend

25 March 2024

NT Health is urging Territory residents and holidaymakers to protect themselves against mosquito bites leading into the Easter long weekend, as recent wet weather conditions have caused mosquito numbers to increase.

From now until June is the highest risk period for serious mosquito borne diseases, such as the potentially fatal Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) and Japanese encephalitis (JE).

Eight cases of MVE were recorded in the NT in 2023, with one fatal case. In 2021 and 2022, a total of three cases of JE were recorded, with one fatal case.

Nina Kurucz, Director of Medical Entomology, NT Health, said the Easter long weekend is a timely reminder to stay protected from mosquitoes, with many people planning to take part in outdoor activities and camping trips.

“To ensure the best protection from mosquito borne diseases, it’s important to cover up, use insect repellents and avoid areas where mosquitoes are active, such as swamps and wetlands,” she said.

“Infants and children especially need to be protected.

“Following the significant rainfall associated with Cyclone Megan, mosquito numbers are expected to increase dramatically this week across all regions.

“This is because rain, high temperatures and humidity create ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes.”

Symptoms of MVE and JE viruses can include headaches, fever, nausea and vomiting, muscle aches, seizures, tremor or fits and can progress to delirium, coma, permanent brain damage or death.

Anyone concerned about symptoms should contact their local healthcare provider. Avoiding mosquito bites is a top priority. JE can also be prevented with vaccines. NT residents may be eligible to receive a free vaccine.

Learn more about JE and the JE vaccine and MVE on the [NT Health website](#)

To minimise the chance of being bitten by mosquitoes, people should:

- Make sure infants and young children are well protected from mosquitoes
- Cover up with long sleeved shirts and pants, socks and shoes
- Use insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalypt (PMD)
- Avoid areas where mosquitoes are active, especially after sun down
- Use mosquito proof tents when camping.

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