

General Information

There are about 170 different kinds of mosquitoes in North America alone. These pests are part of the same family as houseflies and fruit flies, because they all have two clear, veined wings. Best known as a summer pest, Mosquitoes can develop from egg to adult in 10 to 14 days.

Size	¼"-3/8"	Common Name	Mosquito
Shape	Narrow, Oval	Kingdom	Animalia
Color	Pale brown with whitish strips across abdomen	Phylum	Arthropoda
Legs	6	Class	Insecta
Wings	Yes	Order	Diptera
Antenna	Yes	Family	Culicidae
		Genus Species	Varies

Diet

We usually say, "I've been bitten by a mosquito", but this isn't completely true. Mosquitoes don't bite - female mosquitoes feed on plant nectar and blood. They need the protein to reproduce. To get to the blood, they pierce our skin with their **proboscis** and suck our blood. Male mosquitoes feed exclusively on plant nectars. Mosquitoes are busiest at night and will fly up to 14 miles for a blood meal. They hunt for food by detecting body heat and **Carbon Dioxide**, the gas we breathe out.

Habitat

Mosquitoes breed in soft, moist soil or **stagnant** water sources such as storm drains, old tires, children's wading pools and birdbaths.

Impact

Mosquitoes spread diseases such as **West Nile Virus, Malaria** and **Dengue fever**.

Prevention

- * Replace all stagnant water at least once a week.
- * Remove trash from around any standing water.
- * When sleeping outdoors or in areas where mosquito populations are heavy, surround your bed with "mosquito" netting.
- * Screen windows, doors and other openings with fine mesh.
- * Avoid going outdoors at night.
- * Use insect repellent containing DEET on exposed skin anytime you're around mosquitoes. DEET doesn't kill the mosquitoes. It just disorients them and they look elsewhere for food.

To learn more about this and other pests, visit <http://www.pestworldforkids.org/research.html>