Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans. There are a number of things you can do to protect against mosquitoes.

Common mosquito areas and types

Saltmarsh – the *Aedes vigilax* mosquitoes are prolific breeders in saltmarsh/mangrove areas. They are implicated in the transmission of Ross River and Barmah Forest viruses. Breeding is generally triggered when the tides are greater than 2.4m or a rainfall event occurs. These mosquitoes can easily travel up to 10 kilometres from their breeding sites. The adult female is a medium size, dark mosquito with white banding on its legs and is most active at sunrise and sunset.

Freshwater – the *Culex annulirostris* are freshwater mosquitoes which breed in temporary and semi-permanent freshwater pools. They are capable of transmitting Ross River and Barmah Forest viruses. These mosquitoes are mostly noticeable after periods of heavy rain and can travel up to 5 kilometres from their breeding sites. The adult is brownish; medium sized with banding on its legs and is most active at sunrise and sunset.

Container Breeding – the *Aedes notoscriptus* mosquitoes breed in containers such as plant saucers, tyres, blocked guttering or buckets. These mosquitoes are active day and night and are very common in the shaded areas around houses. They can be active during the winter months. The female is small with white markings on its head, body and legs. The adults can emerge in as little as five days and have been implicated in the transmission of viruses and heartworm in dogs.

What is council doing?

Council monitors known freshwater breeding sites throughout the year and conducts aerial treatments in saltmarsh areas within the shire to treat the larvae cycle at the critical time.

Two main biological control products are used, namely–

Methoprene – an insect growth regulator that specifically targets the larvae's development and stops them becoming adults. This product has a very low impact on the environment. The aerial application of Methoprene is only effective against mosquitoes in the larval (aquatic) stage.

BTI (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*)– a bacterium that specifically targets the gut lining of mosquito larvae. It is only effective when consumed by the mosquito larvae and therefore has little or no impact on the environment.

What can I do?

Check your rainwater tank – check your tanks on a regular basis as a small matchstick end sized hole is big enough for mosquitoes to enter and breed thousands of larvae. Ensure there are mosquito proof screens on all openings and any source holding water is emptied.

Tips to protect from mosquitoes –

- Use repellent containing DEET when outside
- Wear long sleeve shirts and trousers, light colours are best
- Limit time outside around dusk and dawn
- Remove water sources around the house including any containers, pot plants or items holding water
- Change water in pet bowls and bird baths regularly
- Keep ornamental ponds and fountains stocked with fish
- Clean your roof and gutters on a regular basis
- Keep swimming pools clean and chlorinated
- Increase light and movement around dark and damp areas

For more information

Contact council by email, telephone or in person (details below).

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