

# Controlling mosquito breeding after floods, storms and cyclones

## Fact sheet

Mosquito numbers can increase after floods, storms and cyclones as standing water from heavy rainfall and flooding provides the perfect conditions for mosquito breeding. Increased numbers of mosquitoes lead to an increased risk of being bitten and contracting mosquito-borne diseases.

### Protecting you and your family

You can reduce the number of potential breeding sites around your home by

- cleaning up around your house and yard following a cyclone or flood
- removing any pools of standing water around your house and yard—this may involve clearing debris from ditches, cutting small channels to help pooling water drain, or filling in holes and vehicle wheel ruts
- cleaning up debris deposited on your property by flood waters or a cyclone. While a lot of this debris may be half-buried, it often contains enough water to breed large numbers of mosquitoes



Figure 1 Mosquito on a leaf

Rain or floodwater may have also collected in containers around your yard, so make sure you empty and wipe out containers and store them in a dry place or dispose of them responsibly. Common mosquito breeding sites include

- pot plant bases (inside and outside)
- tyres
- tarpaulins
- palm fronds and bromeliads
- buckets
- tin cans and plastic containers
- boats
- bird baths
- outdoor toys
- roof gutters (if blocked by leaf debris).

Rainwater tanks can also be a potential breeding site for mosquitoes. You can reduce risk by

- checking the mosquito screens and flap valves on rainwater tanks—particularly in-ground tanks—to ensure that the screens and flap valves are still in place
- making any necessary repairs.

Swimming pools can also become potential breeding sites for mosquitoes. Ensure they are free from debris and chlorinated or salted appropriately.

## Avoid being bitten

There are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes

- regularly apply and reapply insect repellent in accordance with the product directions (repellents containing DEET or picaridin are most effective)
- some repellents are not suitable for infants under 3 months of age, consider the use of physical barriers (such as netting on prams and cots) in these circumstances
- wear long, loose, light-coloured clothing
- use flying insect spray or plug-in insecticide devices to kill mosquitoes indoors. Mosquito coils can be used outdoors in well ventilated areas
- inspect and repair all damaged insect screens throughout the home
- consider avoiding outdoor activities at dawn or dusk when mosquitoes are most active.



*Figure 2 Mosquito on skin*

Speak to your doctor if you become unwell with fever, headache, skin rash, joint or muscle pain. See fact sheet “[Mosquito-borne diseases after a storm, flood or cyclone](#)” for greater detail on infections related to mosquitoes in Queensland.

## Further information

- Department of Health – [Disaster Management](#)
- Department of Health – [Mosquito borne diseases and dengue](#)
- Department of Health - [A guide to keeping your tank safe](#)
- Contact your doctor, hospital or health clinic
- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) at any time
- Contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) for your nearest [public health unit](#).