Remove Mosquito Eggs From Water Container Walls

**KEY FACTS**
- Frequently-used water containers are potential breeding sites for the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.
- The female mosquito attaches her eggs to the interior walls of water containers just above the water line, and the eggs can be difficult to see.
- Research has shown that simply cleaning the container is not enough; the specific technique and materials used are crucial to reduce the number of eggs that may hatch.
- The “Untadita” procedure has been shown to be the most effective in removing eggs, but it requires a specific detergent and bleach mixture that must be rinsed off (see How to Remove Mosquito Eggs Correctly; Technique 1).
- Households with scarce water supplies can apply only bleach to the container walls, without rinsing or emptying the containers (Technique 2).
- Scrubbing the container walls with a brush but without detergent or bleach is least effective, but it is better than not cleaning the containers at all.

**WHO**
Household members in charge of water storage.

**WHAT**
Eliminate mosquito eggs weekly from walls of frequently-used water containers.

**WHY**
Zika-carrying mosquitoes lay their eggs on the interior walls of water containers.

**HOW TO REMOVE MOSQUITO EGGS CORRECTLY**
- Identify the containers in the home used to store water for short-term use, that is, several times a week.
- Once these are identified, set aside time every week to remove eggs from the container walls.
- Use one of the following four techniques, listed in order of effectiveness below, to eliminate mosquito eggs from the walls of the containers:

**TECHNIQUE 1 (UNTADITA METHOD): SCRUB THE WALLS OF WATER CONTAINERS WITH A BRUSH AND A MIXTURE OF NON-AMMONIA DETERGENT WITH BLEACH.**

1. Mix chlorine bleach with common powder laundry detergent (that does not contain ammonia) in equal parts to make a paste; do not add water.
2. Using a sponge, apply the mixture to the walls of the container, making up more mixture if necessary to cover the walls.
3. Wait at least 10 minutes for the bleach to have contact with the eggs.
4. Scrub the mixture on the walls with a hard, plastic bristle brush for at least five minutes.
5. Rinse the walls of the container with water to remove the detergent and bleach mixture.
6. Repeat these steps weekly.

**Note:** If preferred, empty the container before applying the mixture (it does not have to be completely empty to begin).

**TECHNIQUE 2: APPLY BLEACH DIRECTLY TO WATER CONTAINER WALLS.**

1. Dip a sponge in household bleach. Undiluted bleach is recommended.
2. Dab the bleach on the interior walls of the container, focusing on the area above the water line. Ensure the area above the water line is well-covered with bleach.
3. If the container is empty, pour some bleach on the bottom as well.
4. Allow the bleach to dry for 15 minutes (allow for a longer time if the bleach was diluted before applying).

5. Proceed with normal use of the water, or to fill the container as intended.

6. Repeat these steps weekly.

Notes:
- This technique can be used without emptying or rinsing the water container. It is not intended for purifying drinking water or killing mosquito larvae living in the water; it is meant to kill the eggs attached to the inside walls of the container.
- Place the chlorine directly onto the walls of the container; do not pour it into the water.
- Use only chlorine, no detergent or soap.
- There is no need to scrub the container walls.

TECHNIQUE 3: SCRUB WALLS OF THE CONTAINER WITH DETERGENT.

1. If possible, completely empty the water storage container and, also if possible, discard the water as it may contain larvae or pupae. If water is still in the container when it is scrubbed, eggs may become dislodged and sink to the bottom and may still hatch.

2. Using a brush with hard plastic bristles, with soap or detergent, scrub the walls of the container using a circular motion, especially the parts immediately above and below the line that was left by the water, to remove the eggs stuck to the walls.

3. If possible, scrub the bottom of the container to remove sediment, algae, and leaves that accumulate and that could feed mosquito larvae.

4. Repeat the process once a week.

Note: Use this technique if neither Technique 1 nor 2 can be practiced.

TECHNIQUE 4: SCRUB WALLS OF THE CONTAINER WITH A BRUSH ALONE.

1. Completely empty the water storage container and discard the water if possible, as it may contain mosquito larvae or pupae.

2. Remove eggs from the walls of the empty container using a hard, plastic bristle brush.

3. Firmly scrub the walls of the container with circular motions.

4. Rinse the container thoroughly, as eggs dislodged from the walls can fall into the container and hatch if they are not destroyed and removed.

Note: Scrubbing container walls alone is the least recommended technique, but it may be necessary if no detergent or bleach are available. It is better than not cleaning the container at all.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING THIS BEHAVIOR
- Focus on household members in charge of maintaining frequently used water storage containers.
- Encourage families to choose one day each week that suits them best to eliminate mosquito eggs from containers, so that it becomes a habit.
- Clarify how the techniques for eliminating eggs from water containers are different from general cleaning activities done in the home.
- Remind families that the specific technique and materials used are crucial to reduce the number of eggs that may hatch.
- Help families choose which of the four cleaning techniques to use by identifying whether the household can empty water containers weekly and which materials they have: hard bristle brush, power laundry detergent, and/or bleach.
SUPPORTING EVIDENCE


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