

Remove Standing Water



— WHO —

Families and community organizations.

— WHAT —

Regularly remove standing water not intended for storage around the home and in communal areas.

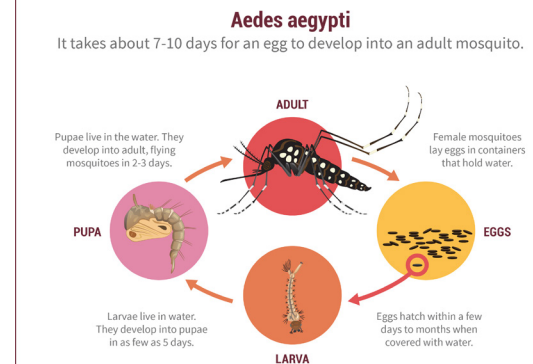
— WHY —

Eliminating standing water, where mosquitos lay their eggs, significantly reduces the adult mosquito population.

KEY FACTS

- The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito lives in and around people's homes and does not travel far in its lifespan. If there is a mosquito in the home, it is very likely several breeding sites are in the yard.
- The most favorable places for mosquito breeding are containers with walls exposed to rainwater, especially under shade and where organic matter accumulates (for example, decaying leaves, algae).
- The elimination of standing water can reduce the adult mosquito population by up to 70 percent if done at least once a week in the same areas.
- Breeding sites must be eliminated weekly by removing standing water because new eggs will develop into adult mosquitos in seven to 10 days.

Mosquito Life Cycle



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Mosquito Life Cycle," accessed at www.cdc.gov/csdp/pdfs/MosquitoLifeCycle.pdf

HOW TO REMOVE STANDING WATER

AROUND THE HOME

- Dedicate 15 minutes each week to identify and eliminate mosquito breeding sites in and around the yard of the house.
- Know that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito prefers areas where the sun does not bother them and where leaves decaying in water provide food for the larvae (worms).
- Be aware that mosquitoes breed in diverse containers and seek hard-to-access locations such as roofs and gutters.
- Identify all possible objects that are exposed to rain or can accumulate water, inside and outside the house, including:
 - Tires
 - Tree trunks
 - Gutters on roofs
 - Pots, planters, and their dishes/bases
 - Empty plastic or glass bottles
 - Toys
 - Buckets/cubes
 - Unusable objects
 - Drinking dishes/troughs for animals
 - Empty cans
 - Bromeliads
 - Vases
 - Permanent or fixed objects such as: pilas, fountains, pools
- At least once a week, empty these objects and turn them over, cover them, puncture them, or throw them away.
- Empty and clean gutters on roofs once a week as well.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Map the breeding sites in the community under the leadership of community authorities.
 - Use community maps to focus the search on areas where stagnant water or rainwater tend to accumulate.
 - Focus the search at schools, health posts, cemeteries, construction sites, empty lots, and community centers, which have many empty objects that can become reservoirs for stagnant water.
 - Remember that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito prefers shaded areas where water and organic matter accumulate.
- At each possible breeding site, use a white plastic container to obtain and inspect water to see whether it contains larvae.
- Once breeding sites have been identified, empty, turn over, cover, puncture or throw away any container that accumulates water.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites weekly.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING THIS BEHAVIOR

AROUND THE HOME

- When conducting home visits, accompany family members through the house and yard to identify potential breeding sites together and explain how to search, identify, and eliminate *Aedes aegypti* larvae in water.
- Promote understanding of the life cycle and behavior of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito for an active and efficient search for eggs and larvae.
- Promote an attitude of “family detectives” and encourage families to spend 15 minutes each week identifying and eliminating standing water (not intended for storage) that could become mosquito breeding sites.
- Promote constant vigilance and proactive searching of mosquito breeding sites, which may vary from week to week.
- Remind families that breeding sites include roofs and gutters, especially if the flow of rainwater is obstructed or very slow.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Motivate and mobilize community leaders and members to participate in organized efforts to remove standing water in communal areas that could become mosquito breeding sites.
- Avoid general community clean-ups because these activities dilute efforts and are less effective in eliminating mosquito breeding sites.
- Gain pledges and weekly commitments from community leaders and members.
- Organize a weekly search-and-eliminate brigade.
- At community assemblies, stress the importance of these efforts for stopping Congenital Zika Syndrome, and recognize community members for their work and the positive results they have achieved.
- Encourage community members to share what they have learned about eliminating standing water with their family, friends, and neighbors, to increase everyone’s commitment.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

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ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH ACTION+RESEARCH

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PHOTO CREDIT

USAID Project: Innovative use of the care group model with mHealth to reduce Zika virus transmission and improve community engagement response in Nicaragua

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breakthroughactionandresearch.org/zika-prevention

