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 mosquitoes in seven to 10 days.

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**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 mosquitoes lay their eggs, significantly reduces the adult mosquito population.

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**Mosquito Life Cycle**

*It takes about 7-10 days for an egg to develop into an adult mosquito.*

- **Pupa**: Live in water. They develop into adult *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in 2-3 days.
- **Larva**: Live in water. They develop into pupae in as few as 5 days.
- **Egg**: Female mosquitoes lay eggs in containers that hold water.
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

Breakthrough ACTION and Breakthrough RESEARCH are USAID’s flagship programs for social and behavior change working to increase the practices of priority health behaviors for improved health and development outcomes.

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