

Cover Water Storage Containers

— WHO —

Household members in charge of water storage.

— WHAT —

Cover long-term water storage containers at all times with a tight-fitting lid that does not warp or touch the water.

— WHY —

Containers can become mosquito breeding sites if they are left uncovered with stagnant water inside, or if they have a lid that is broken or dipping in the water.

KEY FACTS

- The containers in the home that store water not used often—once a week or less—can become breeding sites for Zika-carrying mosquitos.
- These long-term storage containers may include tanks, cisterns, barrels, water tanks, or large buckets.
- Covering long-term water storage containers can be effective in reducing breeding sites if a tight fitting, long-lasting lid is available.
- Covering short-term water storage containers is less effective, and even counterproductive, because frequent lid use can result in wear and tear.
- If the container lid is broken or dips in the water, it can become a breeding site itself.
- To be effective, lids must be tight-fitting and used consistently and correctly.

HOW TO COVER STORAGE CONTAINERS CORRECTLY

AROUND THE HOME

- Identify the containers in the home that are used to store infrequently used water—water accessed once a week or less. These may include tanks, cisterns, barrels, water tanks, large buckets, and other containers.
- Evaluate whether these containers can be covered with a tight-fitting lid.
- Cover only the long-term water storage containers.

COVER CONTAINERS WITH TIGHT-FITTING LIDS THAT DO NOT CRACK OR WARP

- Lids for long-term water storage containers should block entrance of mosquitoes that try to lay their eggs on the interior walls.
- Some containers cannot be covered well, for example, pilas (cement washbasins). For these containers, families should focus on cleaning the containers to remove mosquito eggs (see Remove Mosquito Eggs From Water Container Walls).
- Barrels and round tanks are better suited for lids that seal tightly.
- Be aware that not all lids can stop mosquitoes from entering. To be effective, the lid should have the following characteristics:
 - The lid should make a very tight seal. If it does not seal well, the lid can have the opposite effect, providing shade and making the water container more favorable for a mosquito to lay its eggs.
 - The lid should not touch the water, especially if it is made of cloth, because small pools can form where a mosquito can lay its eggs.
 - If the cover is made of cloth, the fabric must allow rainwater to pass through it, so that water does not accumulate on top.
 - The lid must be made of a material that does not crack or warp in the heat or the sun.
 - A metal mesh with holes smaller than the size of an adult mosquito may be used, as long as it remains in

perfect condition and seals tightly.

- Use the lid at all times.
- Keep the lid in excellent condition and replace if it begins to warp or crack.
- Remember that it is better not to cover water containers at all than to cover them partially or inconsistently.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING THIS BEHAVIOR

- Focus on members of the household in charge of long-term water storage containers.
- Explain that the lids must seal well and have all the features described in the instructions found in this section.
- Combine efforts to cover long-term water storage containers with other behaviors: cleaning the interior walls of water containers and eliminating mosquito breeding sites in communal areas.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

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ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH ACTION+RESEARCH

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