

Dear Community,

Dengue infections are a severe viral risk for which there is no medicinal cure although the symptoms may be treated.

Several households of your friends and neighbors have already suffered dengue infections in our community this year. Recently, this was a topic at our last Community Forum and it warrants top-of-mind awareness for everyone in our community.

Some of you may have already had a first infection and not been aware as sometimes there are no symptoms on a first infection. I would refer you to the [WHO](#) for specific information on symptoms, but let's talk about prevention.

The [CDC](#) lists Dengue as a Non-Vaccine-Preventable disease and listed Costa Rica at Level 1 precautions for Dengue on July 23, 2024. The CDC recommends:

- Use insect repellent
- Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Take steps to control mosquitoes in and around your home

Although the first two may be a matter of personal choice, the last suggestion is something we can all do to make our neighborhood safer. Here are some examples:

1. Eliminate any stagnant water from your property

Stagnant water has arguably become the breeding ground for mosquitoes to complete their life cycle. Most of the types of mosquitoes will lay and hatch their eggs directly into the stagnant fresh water that can be found around the property.

Adult female mosquitoes breed in large numbers (approximately 100-400 eggs), and it hatches within 48 hours (about 2 days) to begin larvae stages depending on water temperature.

Look around your property, and try to eliminate any items that could be the sources of stagnant water:

- Buckets
- Tin cans
- Used or discarded tires
- Plate flower vase
- Kiddie pools
- Pet water dishes

2. Keep the water moving

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water, so if you have a pond at home you have to ensure that to keep the water moving.

Installation of water features, such as a water fountain or a water agitator will help you to limit the opportunity for mosquitoes to lay their eggs - since larvae can only survive in stagnant water and not on moving water.

3. Grow some mosquito-repelling plants in your garden

Besides adding beauty to your garden, growing some of the mosquito-repelling plants is the easiest and cheapest way to reduce the number of mosquitos in your property naturally.

Many plants emit strong scents and very repulsively for many insects that can be used to deter mosquitoes too. There are at least 8 plants that repel mosquitoes naturally you can grow in the garden:

- Lemongrass
- Lavender
- Rosemary
- Catnip
- Lemon balm
- Geraniums
- Basil
- Mint

4. Remove mosquito resting areas

The most common mosquito species are most active at night - during the dawn and evening hours. During the daytime, they prefer to harbor in dark, sheltered and undisturbed places. To reduce the likelihood of mosquitoes flying around your home by removing any areas that potentially could be promoting mosquito harborage both inside and outside your house.

Although mosquito resting places may vary between species, there are some generalities about mosquito resting behavior.

- **Outside your house** – mosquitoes like to rest on tall grass and shrubs. Trim your vegetation regularly and keep the shrubs away from the foundation of your house to make your yard less attractive to become mosquitoes' resting area.
- **Inside your house** – *Aedes Aegypti* is one of the mosquito species that are commonly known for their indoor resting preferences. There are a couple of places that become an *Aedes* mosquito resting site inside your house, including under the furniture, hanging utensils in the kitchen and hanging used clothes in the bathroom.

Did you know? *Aedes* mosquitoes like to rest on the hanging used clothes because it consists of some substances that can attract them to come, these include humans' amino acids, body heat, odor and sweat.

5. Keep your roof gutters clean and free from debris

It is important to always keep your gutters clean from debris all the time. It is not just important as a part of home maintenance, but when leaves and other debris clog up the waterways it will become a perfect place for mosquito breeding grounds.

(Ed. Note: Many of us come from climates where gutter cleaning only is attended to in the Fall, here it is a year-round necessity, especially in Cinco Ventanas)

6. Keep cool temperatures inside the house

Mosquitoes are weak fliers, so placing an air fan in the house and patio and/or turning on the air conditioner throughout the night while you're sleeping might become the best mosquito deterrent inside the house.

The temperature always goes side-by-side with mosquito feeding habits. That is why the idea to keep the cool temperature inside the house is a simple trick to make mosquito go away, because:

- Mosquitoes are cold-blooded insects, meaning they will be more active in warm temperatures instead of cold or cool temperatures.
- The wind released by the fan or air conditioner will make it difficult for mosquitoes to fly near you. As a comparison with other flying pests, *Aedes* mosquito flies 6 times slower than a housefly, and even 30 times slower than horse fly.
- Although they will not go away, many mosquito species will go and hide to look for warmth spots when the temperature turns cooler.