

MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IN S.C.

At least 61 different species of mosquitoes exist in South Carolina. Mosquitoes are pests that can cause itchy bites, but they can also cause serious health issues. Mosquitoes can carry harmful viruses and parasites that infect millions of people worldwide each year. Mosquito-borne diseases can cause brain inflammation (or encephalitis), birth defects, internal bleeding, complications from parasites and even death in some cases.

Disease monitoring

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) works with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other state and local partners to monitor mosquito-borne diseases that can be spread to humans. The agency conducts testing for mosquito-borne diseases in people and birds and coordinates testing of mosquitoes and other animals, mainly horses. The agency also provides data and information to help individuals and communities take action to reduce mosquito populations in their area and prevent bites that can spread disease.

Some of the most common existing / potential mosquito-borne viruses and parasites in South Carolina include:

- Encephalitis (swelling of the brain) viruses, including West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis virus
- Heartworms in dogs and cats

Other high-profile mosquito-borne diseases found in the United States and abroad include:

- Chikungunya
- Cache Valley
- Dengue
- Filariasis
- Jamestown Canyon
- La Crosse
- Malaria
- Tensaw
- Yellow fever
- Zika

As of April 13, 2016, there are no confirmed cases of Zika virus in South Carolina, but it is a high priority that is being closely monitored in close collaboration with the CDC.

For more information and state data on mosquito-borne (or arbovirus) diseases, visit www.scdhec.gov/mosquitoes.