

Prevention and Control of Disease Vectors on Fort Riley

The warmer weather brings people outside with the bugs that spread disease(s). The Department of Public Health at Irwin Army Community Hospital has been actively conducting vector surveillance for the 2017 season. Following just a few personal safety and housekeeping measures will lessen the risk of getting sick.

Personal Protection:

- Be diligent during peak mosquito biting times from dusk until dawn. Wear pants and long sleeved shirts and socks when outside (especially out in wooded areas or places with thick vegetation).
- Insect repellent that contains DEET (at least 20% active ingredient) works well for repelling mosquitoes and ticks.
- Mosquitoes may be able to bite through clothing. Clothing (and only clothing, not on bare skin) may be sprayed with an insect repellent with the active ingredient permethrin. Permethrin is effective for preventing bugs from biting through the clothing (also shoes, bed nets, and camping gear), but reapplication is necessary after several washes (refer to product label for more details).
- If you also need to use sunscreen, consider applying sunscreen to skin, and then apply DEET (refer to product label for more details).

Housekeeping measures:

- Reduce standing water around the outside of the home such as cans, old tires, stopped up rain gutters, and children's swimming pools.
- Keep grass around the perimeter of the home cut short.

Tick Removal:

- After engaging from outdoors activities, take a shower, and conduct a full-body tick check.
- If you find a tick, do not panic, it takes several hours for ticks to feed once they have attached to your body.
- Remove ticks by using fine-tipped forceps. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible (see below illustrations) and pull upward with steady, even pressure.
- After removing the tick, you should thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends avoiding folklore remedies such as "painting" the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. Your goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible--not waiting for it to detach.

If you would like more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov or call Environmental Health at (785) 239-3719. Environmental Health will be distributing permethrin and DEET while supplies last at building 7665 on Normandy Drive. Units that need repellent for deployment or Field Training Exercises may contact the Hazardous Material Processing Center located at building 1930. For more information, contact Ms. Paula Urban at (785) 239-6577.

