WARM WEATHER BRINGS THE MOSQUITOES AND THE NEED FOR PERSONAL PROTECTION
MORGANTOWN, WV – MARCH 11, 2016

One of the biggest problems during the summer months for public health is the mosquito. They carry the infectious diseases West Nile virus and La Crosse Encephalitis in West Virginia. Last year the public was warned that mosquitoes had acquired a new disease Chikungunya and this year there is the probability that the Zika virus may eventually join this infectious disease group. Because there are no vaccines or antivirals to cure these diseases, the only way to avoid becoming infected is to avoid being bitten by a mosquito.

The best way to avoid being bitten by a mosquito is to use an insect repellent. There are many insect repellents on the market. The CDC recommends that you use products containing the ingredients which have been registered with the EPA for use as repellents applied to skin and clothing. EPA registration means that the EPA does not expect the product to cause adverse effects to human health or the environment when used according to the label. DEET, picaridin and IR3535 are often used because they are EPA products that provide longer lasting protection. To optimize safety and effectiveness, repellents should be used according to the label instructions.

When going outside be sure to wear long sleeves, long pants and socks. If your clothing is too thin, mosquitoes may bite through the clothing. Clothing and footwear can be treated with permethrin. Permethrin repels and kills ticks and mosquitoes. Permethrin should not be used directly on the skin.

Insect repellents can be used on children but the label instructions must always be followed. Insect repellents should never be used on babies younger than two months of age. Insect repellents should never be applied on the child’s hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin. Do not spray insect repellents directly onto the child. Spray repellent onto your hands and then apply to the child’s face.

All this protection wears off and comes off when you go inside your home so don’t forget to mosquito proof your home. Install or repair screens on windows and doors and then take a look around your home and make sure there are no other ways for mosquitoes to gain entrance.

More information on repellents can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html

If you have questions or need more information about how to protect yourself from mosquito bites, call the Monongalia County Health Department at 304-598-5100.

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