

External Parasites: Mosquitoes

The Basics Of Mosquitoes

Anyone who has gone camping knows about mosquitoes. They swarm over any exposed skin and bite, leaving small itchy bumps. Mosquito populations increase in warmer temperatures and regions with higher humidity. We have seen these seasonal pests in Illinois as early as April and as late as November. The female mosquitoes bite dogs, cats, people, and other animals and live off their blood. The male mosquitoes live off of nectar.

Mosquitoes can spread viruses, protozoa, and antigens to people and animals including West Nile virus and [heartworms](#). Their saliva contains a protein cocktail with anticoagulant properties that they inject into their victim so that they may continue to feed. These compounds cause the itchiness that pets and people experience after a bite.

Mosquito Species

- There are too many mosquito species to list. (More than 2000.)

The Life Cycle Of Mosquitoes

Although clouds of these pests seem to plague people and pets all summer, individual mosquitoes only live two weeks or so. The female mosquito lays eggs in stagnant water, often 100 to 200 at a time. In a couple of days, the eggs hatch producing larvae that float on the surface. After a week, they pupate and form a cocoon and in two to three days emerge as winged adults.

Transmission of Mosquitoes

These pests are parasites of opportunity and bite anyone or anything nearby.

Symptoms Of Mosquito Exposure

The worst symptoms that a mosquito produces are the red inflamed bumps at their bite sites. Other symptoms arise from the diseases that mosquitoes transmit and must be addressed separately.

Treatment And Prevention Of Mosquitoes

To best protect your pet, use a topical mosquito repellent and contact kill medication. As yet, no one has devised a suitable and safe medication for outdoor cats to protect them from mosquitoes. Do not use any mosquito medication designed for dogs on your cats, it can be toxic.

Possibility Of Human Complications From Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes transmit many diseases that are potentially dangerous to people.