

Mosquitoes

At last count, 53 species of mosquitoes exist in California (compare that to about 3500 worldwide). In addition to the itchy bites, they are capable of transmitting a number of potentially deadly diseases. Here are some proven methods for mosquito bite prevention.

Dress for success. Cover your body - long pants, long sleeves. Make it even better by using clothing pretreated with the insecticide permethrin or spray your own clothes with permethrin. This insecticide should not be sprayed directly on your skin.

Cover exposed skin with an EPA-approved insect repellent. Do not apply the repellent under your clothes. Always follow directions on the label. If you are also planning on wearing sunscreen, the order of application is sunscreen first, repellent second.

Go out on mosquito patrol. Check your home for places that they can get in and then repair the access points like holes in screens and gaps under doors. Do you have plant saucers, birdbaths, toys, tires, or just low areas where water collects and mosquitoes can lay eggs? Empty plant saucers. Change birdbath water daily and scrub the birdbath at least weekly. The same goes for outdoor pet bowls. Fill in low areas and don't over-water. Keep your pool treated. If it's your neighbor's pool that has been left untreated and is the source of the problem, you can call the Mosquito Abatement District. Mosquitoes don't recognize property lines. As little as a half-inch of water in a water bottle cap can play host to an innumerable amount of mosquito larvae. Be diligent and aggressive.

Some gardening websites have posted articles about mosquito-repellent plants. A quick search revealed that a plant alone can't repel mosquitoes.

Limit outdoor activities when many mosquitoes are often most active – early morning and evening. It all comes back to prevention. Control mosquitoes by preventing them from laying their eggs.