

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Zika virus reveals importance of mosquito control

As the evidence mounts that Zika virus can cause devastating pregnancy complications including microcephaly and a paralyzing neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre syndrome, health officials are stressing the need for strict mosquito control in areas where the disease is active—as well as in areas in the US where the spread of the disease is likely.

Zika virus is transmitted by the bites of infected mosquitoes—as are many deadly and debilitating diseases including West Nile virus, yellow fever, chikungunya and dengue fever. Zika has already caused more than 1 million known infections in Central America, South America and throughout the Caribbean including Puerto Rico.

The CDC has reported 258 confirmed cases of Zika virus in the United States, in a total of 34 states and the District of Columbia. In all of these cases, travelers were infected with the Zika virus in other countries. But the growing number of Zika cases in the US raises the likelihood of homegrown Zika cases in the US in the near future.

## Reduce Mosquito Breeding Sites

There is no vaccine to prevent the spread of Zika virus. For that reason, experts say the key to controlling the spread of the disease is to control mosquito populations.

“An important part of controlling mosquito-borne viruses is reducing places where mosquitoes can breed,” said Jonathan Cohen, mosquito control expert and President of Summit Responsible Solutions, [www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com](http://www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com). Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, so homeowners need to be vigilant in eliminating places where water can collect and stand in their yards and gardens.”



To reduce mosquito breeding grounds, dispose of cans, plastic containers, old tires and other items that can collect water. Turn over wheelbarrows and empty children’s wading pools. Clean clogged roof gutters, which can become prime mosquito-breeding pools. Periodically empty the saucers under ceramic pots to make sure they are not harboring mosquito larvae.

## Kill Mosquito Larvae with BTI

To prevent mosquitoes from breeding in places where water collects—including ponds, bird baths, animal watering troughs, gutters, tree holes and rain barrels—use a mosquito control product that contains BTI to kill mosquito larvae. BTI (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) is a

bacterium that naturally kills mosquito larvae before they can grow up to become flying, biting, disease-spreading adults. Even though BTI is deadly to mosquito larvae, it is harmless to people, plants, pets, fish, wildlife and beneficial insects.



BTI is the active ingredient in Mosquito Dunks<sup>®</sup>, the number-one selling biological mosquito control product. When a donut-shaped Mosquito Dunk<sup>®</sup> is placed in standing water, the BTI in the Dunk<sup>™</sup> will kill mosquito larvae for up to 30 days.

In places where small amounts of water collect—such as tree holes, potted plant saucers and water reservoirs in self-watering planters, a BTI product called Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> is a good way to kill mosquito larvae. Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> granules can be sprinkled into virtually any place where water can collect. Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> can also be used to kill mosquito larvae in swampy areas and larger areas where water cannot be drained. In addition, Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> are highly effective as a “shock treatment” in water where immediate larval control is needed due to an extremely dense population of mosquito larvae, because the Bits release their active ingredient (BTI) all at once. A Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> application can be immediately followed by the addition of Mosquito Dunks<sup>®</sup> for long-term control.

To kill adult mosquitoes, use a permethrin-based insecticide such as Summit<sup>®</sup> Mosquito and Gnat Barrier. The permethrin in Summit<sup>®</sup> Mosquito and Gnat Barrier kills and repels mosquitoes and other insect pests for up to four weeks. Simply attach a garden hose to the hose-end sprayer bottle and spray the yard perimeter and fences, shrubbery, vegetation, or other vertical surfaces where mosquitoes can hide and rest.

“Once you’ve reduced mosquito breeding grounds in your backyard and used BTI to kill mosquito larvae, get your neighbors involved in mosquito control, too,” said Cohen. “The mosquitoes in their yard can easily travel into your yard and into the yards of everyone on the block. It’s important for the entire neighborhood to take mosquito control seriously—especially to control the spread of disease.”

Mosquito Dunks<sup>®</sup>, Mosquito Bits<sup>®</sup> and Summit<sup>®</sup> Mosquito and Gnat Barrier are available at garden centers, hardware stores (including Ace Hardware, True Value and Tractor Supply), home centers and online retailers.

**Photo Caption:**

*Mosquito Dunks<sup>®</sup> contain a naturally occurring bacterium called BTI that is deadly to mosquito larvae but harmless to other living things.*

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