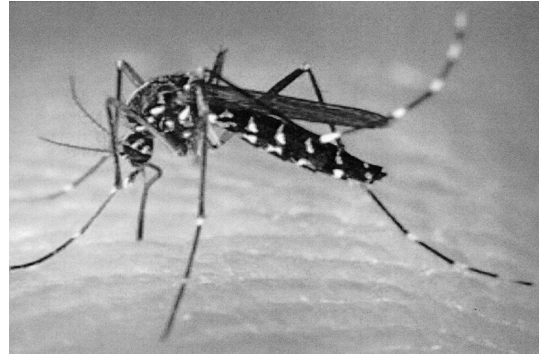


Mosquitoes increase disease risk in USA

adapted from an article by Doyle Rice

- 1 Mosquitoes are more than just an annoyance for the itchy red bites they leave on our skin. They increasingly raise the prospect of spreading deadly diseases normally not found in the USA, experts warn. The risks include dengue fever, usually found in South and Central America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, but which was reported in Key West in May 2010, and in Hawaii earlier this year.
- 2 The USA is increasingly at risk from this and other diseases "as world travel increases, public health and control programs fail, and climate change alters mosquito ecology and habitats," cautions Laura Harrington, an entomologist at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. Mosquito-transmitted diseases, such as malaria and dengue, affect more than 350 million people worldwide each year, Harrington says, leading to more than 3 million deaths. There is no vaccine and no treatment for dengue.
- 3 Entomologists at Cornell are seeking funding from various federal agencies to help investigate new strategies to control diseases from mosquitoes. They're looking at ways to reduce egg production and curb the female mosquito's appetite for blood. Also, they're developing forecasting models to study how climate change will impact mosquito-borne diseases. Higher temperatures, coupled with rain, are the best weather conditions in which mosquitoes can breed, Harrington says.
- 4 37, Cornell-affiliated researchers warn that infestations of bedbugs, which also enjoy the warmth, tend to increase in the summertime. They're infesting homes, hotels, dorms, labs and airports worldwide. Although they are not known to transmit any diseases to humans, "they play with our emotions," reports Jody Gangloff-Kaufmann, an urban entomologist with the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program in Babylon, N.Y. "The stress of dealing with them, and the depression and isolation that comes with them."



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