

The Epi Link

The arrival of warmer weather will cause more mosquito and tick activity. We are more exposed as we begin to spend more time outside and travel to wooded areas for camping or hiking. Different species of mosquitoes and ticks carry varying types of illnesses which can be transferred through a bite.

Here are some of the common illnesses reported and some preventive measures.

Mosquitoes: General Information

- Different types of mosquitoes will bite at different daytimes
 - o West Nile mosquito bites at dawn/dusk
 - o Zika mosquito bites during the day
- Mosquitoes lay eggs in **standing water**
 - o They only need a very *small* amount of water to lay **many** eggs



Prevention: Remember the 4 D's

1. **Wear an insect repellent with DEET**
 - a. EPA-registered insect repellents when used as directed, are safe even for pregnant and breastfeeding women
2. **DRAIN standing water**
 - a. Common in flower pots, old car tires, pet bowls
3. **DRESS in long sleeves and pants when possible**
4. **DAILY**
 - a. Dawn, daytime, dusk, night

Mosquito-Borne Illness Examples

- West Nile Virus
- Zika
- Malaria (with international Travel)



Tick-Borne Illness Examples

- Lyme Disease
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Ticks: General Information

- Ticks like to live in many grassy or wooded areas, or places which are moist and humid
- An adult tick can be anywhere from about 1/4 - 1/8 inch in length

Prevention

1. **Avoid walking through leafy areas, and bushes**
 - a. Stay on the center of trails, avoid brush
2. **Repel ticks** using EPA-registered repellents
3. **Check for ticks** every day you've been outdoors
 - a. Look:

- Under the arms	In and around the ears
- Inside the belly button	In and around body hair
- Between the legs	Around the waist
4. **Remove attached ticks** quickly and correctly
5. **Be alert for fever or rash.** See your doctor if you have symptoms
6. **Prevent ticks on your pets**

Photo credits: *Aedes albopictus* mosquito. James Gathany. Courtesy of CDC PHIL. Blacklegged tick *I. pacificus*. James Gathany and William L. Nicholson, Ph.D. Courtesy of CDC PHIL.

Zika – Other Things to Remember

1. Pregnant women should **NOT** travel to areas at risk with Zika. See [CDC's Zika Travel Information](#).
2. The testing recommendations for Zika have changed.
 - a. Asymptomatic pregnant woman with travel to an area with Zika
 - i. **Test using PCR on serum and urine, 0-12 weeks after last exposure**
 - b. Asymptomatic pregnant woman with ongoing Zika virus exposure OR residing in certain counties three times during pregnancy (see [Guidelines](#) for more information.)
 - i. **Test using PCR on serum and urine, at the first prenatal visit and each subsequent trimester**
3. If a male or *both* male and female have traveled to an area at risk of Zika - even without symptoms
 - a. Any partners should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least **6 months**
4. If a female has traveled to an area at risk of Zika - even without symptoms
 - a. Any partners should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least **2 months**



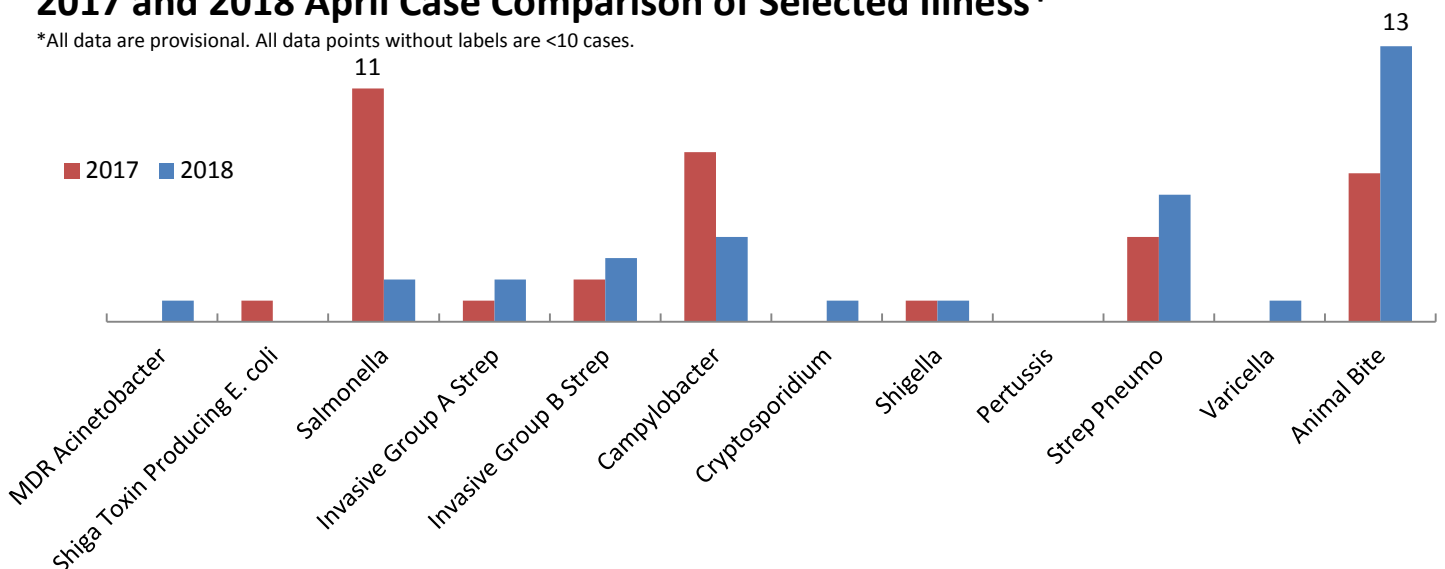
The Problem with "Kissing Bugs"

- Insects of the *triatomine* family, often called "Kissing Bugs" are blood-sucking bugs that can feed on humans.
- They can transmit a parasite causing Chagas Disease. **Acute** disease can be mild symptoms or a tell-tale swelling of the eyelids. **Chronic** disease can cause severe heart, esophageal, or colon problems.
- Generally found in the Americas, including cases in Texas.
- They generally live around houses (beneath porches, cement, brush piles animal enclosures etc.,) and can enter houses through cracks and holes.

Photo credits: "Kissing Bug" Triatoma pallidipennis. James Gathany. Courtesy of CDC PHIL.

2017 and 2018 April Case Comparison of Selected Illness*

*All data are provisional. All data points without labels are <10 cases.



To be included in the email distribution list for health alerts and advisories, email request to Mark.Price@amarillo.gov

Communicable Disease Reporting

Gather patient demographics, relevant labs, and office notes

Fax all information with a coversheet to 806-378-6306, attn: Communicable Disease

For more information call: Laurie Burton – 806-378-6321 or Kirstin Williams – 806-378-6353

List: <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/investigation/conditions/>