



12 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE **TIGER MOSQUITO**

prevenió

SOM

More information:

<http://www.sp.san.gva.es/rvn/>

<http://cuidatecv.es/>



1. What is the tiger mosquito?

It's a species of mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) found in the sprawling tropical forests in Southeast Asia, which has been detected in Catalonia since 2004, and sporadically in the Region of Valencia.

It is an urban mosquito in our environment that thrives off stagnant water to reproduce.

2. Why is its presence worrying?

The health concern is that this species could be a potential transmitter (Vector) of over 22 infectious diseases, including viral ones such as Dengue or chikungunya. Although the possibility of this occurring in our country is low, we must consider taking precautions. Moreover, it is a variety that causes multiple bites which can be very bothersome due to the itchy sensation produced.

3. What does the tiger mosquito look like?

It is quite small, around 5mm (between 2 and 10 mm), black with white striped head, body and legs.



4. Where does it lay its eggs?

The female lays around 80 eggs every 5-6 days on the walls of small vessels which fill with water when the water level rises and release the larvae. In practice, these eggs are as small as a speck of dust, which makes them invisible at first sight.

5. When is the mosquito most active?

Experience so far suggests there is greater activity between, and including, the months of May and November. However, as it depends on the climate we must consider it as variable. In fact, in conditions of low temperatures there are still eggs that are hibernating.

6. Can I do anything to keep them away?

Firstly, it is important to prevent them from reproducing in areas near your home. And precautions can be taken in this respect:

- Ensure any vessels where water could accumulate, such as buckets, toys, vases, ash trays, etc, are covered up, empty or placed upside-down.
- Empty any vessels for collecting rainwater whenever possible.
- Use heavy-duty meshing to cover any water vessels that cannot be emptied.
- Remove and empty any water that builds up in the flower pot drip trays.
- Change the water in your pet's drinking bowl and your water plants regularly to prevent the growth of larvae.

- Avoid water building up in drainage outlets and remove anything obstructing the water flow.
- Cover up any holes and depressions (puddles) where water could build up in outdoor land.
- Empty any plastic inflatable swimming pools every 3 or 4 days, or store them if you're not going to use them.
- Keep an eye on small ponds and rainwater barrels: empty them weekly if possible, or depending on their use, it might be a good idea to cover them with a screen mesh.
- Keep swimming pools covered up whilst not in use.
- Ensure that any wells, water storage tanks or rain barrels are properly covered.
- Cover any hollows in tree trunks and branches by filling them with earth and sand and making sure no water builds up in them.

7. When do tiger mosquitoes usually bite?

Although they may attack at any time of the day, they clearly prefer, and are more active at dusk and dawn.

8. Where do they generally bite us?

Any part of the body may be bitten. However, as the tiger mosquito tends to fly close to the ground, the most commonly affected areas are the legs.

9. Does the bite hurt?

Generally, you don't notice anything when you're first bitten. It's a later reaction that tends to be painful: raised skin (weals), redness, itching sensation, and discomfort that can last several days. This is the body's reaction to the saliva injected into it by the mosquito.

10. Why do mosquitoes not bite everyone?

Mosquitoes are usually guided by their sense of smell. Certain substances emitted by the skin may be more appetising than others, and these can differ from person to person. Actually, everybody is susceptible to being bitten, though some people don't realise because they don't suffer any reaction.

11. How can I protect myself against the tiger mosquito?

They mainly bite outdoors, so again, it's worth remembering the measures we have recommended to avoid sources of breeding grounds for the larvae.

In addition, to reduce their presence indoors, we can place mosquito nets on the windows and use plug-in insecticide dispensers. Household insecticides for mosquitoes are also effective against the tiger mosquito, but they are less effective when used outdoors. There is no evidence about the effectiveness of ultrasound devices.

Clothes worn should leave as little of the body exposed as possible (avoid trousers or short skirts). Use long sleeves and trousers that cover your ankles well. The colour of clothing seems to have no effect on the protection, whereas the thickness does.

Mosquito repellent lotions are also effective against the tiger mosquito. DEET and Icaradin at concentrations equal to or above 20% are the most suitable choices to prevent the bites. It is however worth consulting with your doctor or pharmacist. In any case, you should take the following precautions if you use them.

- The repellent should always be used outdoors and in open spaces for the time required, and the instructions should be closely followed, especially about how often you can apply it during a day.
- Do not give them to children under the age of 2. In older children, they should be used as sparingly as possible, and they should never be used on hands because children will put them in their mouths and eyes.
- It's not advisable to apply them to clothing.
- When it is no longer necessary to use the repellent, you should wash your skin with soap and water.
- If you notice any type of skin reaction, wash the affected area with soap and water and consult a health professional.

12. What should I do if I'm bitten by a tiger mosquito?

The same as for any bite or sting, the first thing you should do is wash the affected area with soap and water and disinfect it. If the pain continues, ask your doctor about the best way to treat it.