# Decision support tool: Mitigating outdoor mosquito-related risk

Advice for centre-based early childhood education and care services in local government areas identified by the Department of Health as at high risk for mosquito-borne illnesses

Warmer temperatures and increased rainfall have increased mosquito breeding, further increasing the risks associated with serious mosquito-borne diseases including Murray Valley encephalitis and Japanese encephalitis virus.

**The best way to prevent mosquito-borne diseases is to avoid mosquito bites.**

### High-risk and very high-risk areas

As at Sunday 29 January 2023, the Department of Health has identified 19 local government areas (LGAs) in northern Victoria as **higher** **risk** for mosquito borne disease transmission: Benalla, Buloke, Campaspe, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Greater Shepparton, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Indigo, Loddon, Mildura, Moira, Northern Grampians Shire, Strathbogie, Swan Hill, Wangaratta, West Wimmera, Wodonga, and Yarriambiack.

Centre-based early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in a high-risk LGA may be at **very high risk** of mosquito-borne disease if they are:

* within 5 kilometres of a water body (creek, river, lake), wetlands or flooded bushland and/or
* impacted by noticeable daytime mosquito activity for most days in a week.

## Decision tool: Mosquito-borne risk and outdoor activities

Services in high-risk LGAs should consider the risks of mosquito-borne disease when planning outdoor activities. This checklist is designed to support ECEC services to consider and manage these risks.

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| **Risk factor** | **Recommendation** |
| **ECEC services in high-risk LGAs** |
| Mosquito activity is easily observable outside | * Reconsider outdoor activity or limit time spent outdoors to areas where residual insecticide treatments have been applied
* Children under 12 months should be kept indoors. Where this is not possible, ensure infants are wearing long, loose-fitting clothing, and use insect nets to cover as much exposed skin as possible
* Recommend that staff and children wear insect repellent (if age-appropriate) if outdoor activities occur
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| The outdoor activity is taking place in the period roughly 2 hours before sunrise or 2 hours before sunset.  | * Consider limiting outdoor activity or limiting time spent outdoors to areas where residual insecticide treatments have been applied
* Recommend that staff and children wear insect repellent (if age-appropriate) if outdoor activities occur
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| Weather conditions are overcast, mild, humid, and/or with light wind (optimal mosquito conditions) | * Consider limiting outdoor activity or limiting time spent outdoors to areas where residual insecticide treatments have been applied
* Strongly recommend that staff and children wear insect repellent (if age-appropriate) if outdoor activities occur
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| **ECEC services in very high-risk areas** (in high-risk LGAs and within 5km of a water body, wetlands, or flooded bushland, and/or impacted by noticeable daytime mosquito activity for most days in a week) |
| The outdoor activity is taking place in the period roughly 2 hours before sunrise or 2 hours before sunset | * Refrain from outdoor activity
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| Mosquito activity is easily observable outside | * Reconsider outdoor activity and, where possible, shift activities indoors
* Recommend that staff and children wear insect repellent (if age-appropriate) if outdoor activities occur
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