PAHO
Pan American Health Organization
World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Americas

Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week 2024

Support and reference document on the general guidelines to develop Mosquito Action Week 2024. The following proposals and recommendations can be adapted to the specific country context.

6-12 May, 2024

Slogan	***United for Health*** **Let's eliminate mosquito breeding sites and protect our community from #Dengue.** In the fight against diseases such as dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, we are united by a common goal: to protect the health of our community. We all play an important role in this collective effort. By eliminating mosquito breeding sites, we not only protect our own health and lives; we also strengthen the fabric of solidarity and citizenship that unites us. Together, we can make a difference and build a safer and healthier environment for everyone.
Key communication outcome	Raise awareness among individuals, communities, municipalities, and different public and private sectors about the importance of getting involved in the control and elimination of mosquito breeding sites to prevent the transmission of diseases like dengue, thus building a healthy environment for all.
Background	Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week is part of efforts made by countries and territories of the Region of the Americas and promoted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to increase knowledge about the relationship between vectors and the diseases they transmit, such as dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, and about the joint work between authorities and communities to implement actions aimed at controlling and preventing the formation of mosquito breeding sites. In 2014, the 17th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), adopted a proposal to establish an annual Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week. In September 2016, during the 55th Directing Council of PAHO, the Member States adopted a strategy to control arboviral diseases, including Zika, dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever. This new strategy recommends strengthening ties between the health sector, communities, and families by fostering participation and access to information.

The objective is to enable communities and families to take an active role in arbovirus prevention and control measures.

The first Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week in the Americas was held in 2016, in the context of the health emergency caused by the Zika virus outbreak. The media campaigns carried out in different countries mainly focused on eliminating the *Aedes aegypti* vector, the main transmitter of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika. Over the course of one week, 27 countries and territories implemented various advocacy, media, and awareness-raising actions at different government and community levels. In 2017, the initiative was repeated through the joint work of international agencies, as well as the reactivation and strengthening of partnerships with other stakeholders.

Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week demands strong political commitment and social mobilization in the countries. Therefore, it is important to continue working on political leadership and advocacy at the highest possible level so that this initiative becomes part of institutional planning in ministries of health and other related sectors, including education, labor, environment, agriculture, tourism, and social development.

In response to the challenges that vector-borne diseases pose to Member States and their prior commitments, PAHO provides technical support to strengthen sustainable integrated strategies, including communication activities, aimed at preventing these diseases. One such strategy is planning and implementing Caribbean Mosquito Awareness Week activities.

PAHO's Plan of Action on Entomology and Vector Control 2018-2023 sets out strategic actions to engage and mobilize local and regional governments and communities, including local health services, with a view to ensuring a sustainable commitment to entomology and vector prevention and control. National health authorities are encouraged to develop plans and agreements to effectively engage and mobilize communities in vector control at local, regional, and national levels, which should include a communications component and an operational budget. It is important to address social dynamics at the community level in order to involve all affected populations, particularly women, ethnic communities, and volunteers.

Current context

Over the past 30 years, the occurrence of dengue in the Americas has been characterized by recurrent epidemic cycles every three to five years. Since 2000, dengue cases have been on the rise. In 2022, several countries in the Region recorded increases in the number of cases of dengue, Zika, and chikungunya; 2023 was a record year, with more than 4.5 million reported cases of dengue in the Region.

Changes in the environment and ecology resulting from climate change can also affect the presence of vectors and significantly exacerbate the health impacts of vector-borne diseases.

Dengue

In the Region of the Americas, 2023 had been the year with the highest number of recorded cases of dengue (4,572,765), including 7,951 (0.17%) serious cases and 2,418 deaths (case fatality rate of 0.053%).

In March 2024, PAHO issued a warning about the increase in dengue cases in the Americas. As of 1 May, 2024, more than 6.5 million cases and more than 2,600 deaths

	(case fatality rate of 0.04%) have been reported in the Region. This figure represents three times the number of cases reported by the same date in 2023. **Chikungunya** In 2024, between EW 1 and EW 17, a total of 225,941 cases of chikungunya, including 82 deaths, were reported in 11 of the countries and territories of the Region of the Americas; these figures are lower than those observed in the same period of 2023. In the same period in 2024, 98% of cases have been reported by Brazil. **Zika** In 2024, up to EW 17, the Region of the Americas reported 6,878 Zika cases, a 75% reduction compared to the same week in 2023. In 2024, Brazil reported the highest proportion of cases (6,599 cases), followed by Bolivia and Bolivia. Since the disease was first detected in Brazil in March 2015, local transmission has been confirmed in all countries and territories in the Americas, except for mainland Chile, Uruguay, and Canada.
Target audiences	• Ministries of health, advisors responsible for formulating policies, laws, and programs related to environmental determinants (water and sanitation, garbage collection, etc.), municipalities, and non-governmental organizations working on health and environmental determinants. • Health professionals at the primary care level and hospitals. • Professional vector control and entomology programs. • Neighborhood committees, community leaders, volunteer brigades, and the general population. • Dengue patients and family members.
Call to action and key messages	The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito vector and dengue cases are spreading to new geographic areas, raising concerns that some countries may not be prepared for increased disease transmission. Several environmental and social factors are conducive to the spread of dengue, including rising temperatures and extreme weather events, in addition to the El Niño phenomenon. Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization also play a crucial role: poor housing conditions and inadequate water and sanitation services create breeding sites in discarded objects and in objects used to collect water. PAHO promotes rigorous dengue surveillance in the Region and has issued nine epidemiological alerts in the last 13 months, providing essential guidance to Member States to prevent and control the disease. The presence of the four dengue serotypes in the Region increases the risk of epidemics and severe forms of the disease, with the simultaneous circulation of two or more serotypes, a situation currently affecting 21 countries and territories in the Americas. It is important to take actions to prevent and control dengue transmission and avoid deaths, including: a comprehensive strategy to control dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases that includes strengthened surveillance, early diagnosis, timely treatment of cases, and vector control. Governments should step up efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and protect individuals from bites, prepare health services for early diagnosis and timely clinical

	management, and educate the population about dengue symptoms so that they seek medical attention immediately. ***Aedes aegypti* control measures** The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the main vector of the dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses in the Americas. It is present in almost all countries, except Canada. This domestic mosquito lives in and around dwellings and can breed anywhere that water accumulates. It takes 7 to 10 days to complete the life cycle from egg to adult, with an adult lifespan of about 4 to 6 weeks. It is important to inform people about the risk of disease transmission and the measures they can take to reduce the number of mosquitoes and prevent bites. National and local authorities should join forces with the community to reduce the conditions that allow mosquitoes to proliferate, while facilitating the adoption of healthy behaviors. Through community involvement, elimination of mosquito breeding sites is the most effective and sustainable mosquito control measure, with a greater long-term impact on adult mosquitoes than can be achieved through chemical control operations. It is necessary to raise awareness among local governments and authorities regarding the need to take action to ensure the availability of safe water and sanitation, proper solid waste management, and maintenance of hygienic conditions and healthy environments. All of these environmental determinants of health affect the well-being of individuals and communities.
Public messages	It is important to reduce contact between mosquitoes and patients who are infected with the dengue, chikungunya, or Zika virus. This will help to prevent the spread of the virus and the disease. Where mosquitoes are abundant, people should sleep under mosquito nets, especially pregnant women, older adults, sick people, and young children. In addition, mosquito netting can be used on doors and windows. Wear clothing that minimizes skin exposure (long pants and skirts, long-sleeved shirts) and use closed shoes. Repellents containing DEET, IR3535, or Icaridin can be applied to exposed skin or clothing. They must be used in strict accordance with the instructions on the product label. Communities should be informed of the importance of participating in clean-up campaigns in neighborhoods, schools, and places where large numbers of people gather, to prevent the accumulation of outdoor containers that collect water. Abandoned areas and vacant lots with garbage such as bottles, containers, plastic objects, and tires that can accumulate water are breeding sites for the mosquitoes that transmit the dengue, chikungunya. and Zika viruses. Messages to the community should emphasize the importance of keeping these areas free of garbage. The following actions are recommended to eliminate mosquito breeding:

	• Prevent water from accumulating in containers outside and around homes (e.g., in flowerpots, glass bottles, containers, plastic bottles, and tires) so that they do not become mosquito breeding sites. • Wash flowerpots with soap and water and change any water they contain. • Wash and brush the walls of water barrels with soap and water. • Tightly cover domestic water tanks. • Avoid accumulating garbage; place it in closed plastic bags, dispose of it in closed containers, and dispose of unused containers. • Clean and unclog gutters and drains to prevent water from accumulating. • Keep useful containers outside the house tightly closed or cover them with mosquito nets and keep them away from accumulating water. • Old tires should be disposed of appropriately, for example, in recycling centers, or should be collected by public waste services. They should not be left out in the open to become mosquito breeding grounds. They can also be stored in a dry, covered place. • Clean air conditioner water tanks weekly. • Empty and clean the external trays of refrigerators. • Wash animal water troughs at least once a week. • Protect doors and windows of dwellings with mosquito mesh/netting. • Clean and brush the surfaces of water containers. • Empty unused swimming pools and keep them dry. • Inspect dwellings and surrounding areas for standing water once a week. **For more information:** Dengue (technical web page).
Communication products and channels	• Campaign website • Information resources for social media • Posters • Press release • Dissemination through PAHO platforms, country offices, newsletters, and web pages
Measurement and evaluation	• Media spots (PAHO/WHO mentions), publications in social media, and visits to the campaign website.