Dear Alice,

I felt a stinging above my eye and when I looked there a tiger mosquito was actually sucking the blood from my forehead. Should I go to a doctor or wait and see what happen? I kept the mosquito but don't know how long before it deteriorates. I washed my forehead with peroxide and then put Neosporin on it. I never had the blood sucked out while I was being bitten. Will my blood be infected? Help

Answer

Dear Reader,

Research indicates that the danger from a tiger mosquito bite is very low because there aren't very many of this type of mosquito. In fact, regular mosquitos pose a greater risk than tiger mosquitos. In all likelihood you and your blood are probably fine. While tiger mosquitos are known to sometimes carry disease, unless you’re in an area currently experiencing an epidemic of arbovirus (arthropod-borne virus) infections, such as dengue, West Nile virus, or yellow fever, you are probably at little to no risk of infection. So, it is probably okay for you to not immediately see your health care provider. That being said, if you do start experiencing fever-like symptoms, you may want to make an appointment.

While there’s a good chance a tiger mosquito bite won’t make you sick, you will likely experience some itchiness for a few days after being bit. This itchiness is perfectly normal. You may want to avoid scratching, however, because scratching may cause your bite to become infected. To ease the itching sensation:

- Use a cool or warm compress to the affected area for short periods at a time,
- Take an over the counter antihistamine medication,
- Apply an anti-itch lotion, or
- Put some toothpaste (with menthol) over the bite.

You mentioned that you kept the mosquito that bit you. Before you dispose of the mosquito, you may want to confirm that you were, in fact, bit by a tiger mosquito. Tiger mosquitos (Aedes albopictus) have black and white striped bodies and spend most of their time flying close to the ground making the ankles, knees, and lower legs their favorite targets. Unlike regular mosquitos, tiger mosquitos rarely bite at night. Instead they prefer the daytime, especially the early morning and later afternoon. Because of their life cycle, which relies on rising waters for their eggs to hatch, adult tiger mosquitos are most likely to be seen from May...
through October.

If you are in an area that happens to have a tiger mosquito problem, there are some things you can do to keep these annoying (and persistent!) little bugs away from you:

- **Remove standing water.** Tiger mosquitos lay eggs in standing water and they don’t usually travel very far from where they are born. If you remove standing water containers, like buckets, cans, flower vases, bird baths, clogged rain gutters, and used tire casings, the number of tiger mosquitos in the area is likely to go down.
- **Insecticides.** Spraying insecticides can be an effective way of reducing the local tiger mosquito population. Experts suggest spraying in early evening or early morning.
- **Repellants.** Use insect repellants with DEET during the day when mosquitos (including tigers) are out and biting. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is a natural repellant option.

Here’s to no more mosquito bites,

Alice!

Category:
General Health [3]
Aches, Pains & Other Ailments [4]
Body Maintenance [5]
Environmental Health [6]
Skin Conditions [7]
Miscellaneous [8]

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Resources

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Medical Services (CUMC) [15]
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