Aedes albopictus
(the Asian tiger mosquito)

**Ae. albopictus biology and vector status**

*Aedes albopictus* is the one of the main vectors of dengue, chikungunya, Zika and yellow fever viruses. These are referred to as ‘arboviruses’ (arthropod-borne viruses). More than half the world’s population is at risk of contracting mosquito-borne diseases.

*Aedes albopictus* can be recognized by white banding on its legs and a distinctive line pattern on its thorax. This mosquito is found in rural and semi-urban settings in tropical, subtropical and temperate regions throughout the world.

It bites during the day, with the most active feeding period 2 hours before and after dawn / dusk. Only the female mosquitoes bite, using the blood as an energy source to produce eggs. The males feed on nectar.

**Virus cycle**

- The newly incubated mosquito can transmit the virus in its saliva when it bites.
- The virus replicates in the host and spreads through the blood.
- During which time the virus replicates in the mosquito and travels to its salivary glands.

**Life cycle**

- **a)** Females lay up to 100 eggs (in several batches, skip oviposition) per cycle. They oviposit on moist walls of water-filled containers. Eggs look like black dirt and can survive drying out for up to 8 months.
- **b)** Larvae emerge from the eggs after the water level rises to cover the eggs. The larvae feed on detritus and microorganisms in the water.
- **c)** After molting 4 times, the larva pupate.
- **d)** Adult mosquitoes emerge from pupae after two days.

**How to prevent mosquito-borne diseases**

No vaccines are available to prevent dengue, chikungunya or Zika. Therefore, avoiding infection by preventing mosquito bites is the best option thus far.

- **Take steps to control mosquitoes inside and outside of your home:**
  - Reduce breeding sites by removing objects that can accumulate water.
  - Keep trash cans, water barrels, etc. sealed.
  - Remove debris from gutters.
  - To kill mosquito eggs, wash containers used to store water weekly (with bleach and soap).
  - Use insect repellent with proven active ingredients such as DEET, icaridin, or oil of lemon / eucalyptus to prevent mosquito bites.

**Breeding sites**

1. Roof guttering
2. Plants: vases, trays, leaf axils
3. Tires
4. Bottles / cans
5. Pet dishes
6. Laundry tanks / cisterns
7. Buckets / containers
8. Garden tools
9. Drums / barrels

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