

Managing mosquitoes in septic tanks

Fact sheet

While mosquitoes can be a nuisance, certain species can also spread disease causing viruses (arboviruses) when they bite. In South Australia arboviruses of concern include [Ross River virus](#), [Barmah Forest virus](#), [West Nile virus Kunjin strain](#), [Japanese encephalitis virus](#) and [Murray Valley encephalitis virus](#).

The mosquitoes that spread these diseases can be found inside or around your home, so it is important to take precautions to prevent mosquitoes from breeding on your property

Prevent mosquito breeding

Mosquitoes can breed in stagnant or pooling water.

A poorly maintained septic system can create breeding opportunities for mosquitoes. Mosquito breeding associated with septic tanks is often associated with inadequate design, operation and maintenance of the system, or methods of effluent disposal or dispersal.

If you are a property owner, resident, or tenant it is your responsibility to ensure that your septic system is properly maintained and operated.



To prevent mosquitoes from breeding in septic tanks, consider the following:

- Ensure there are no cracks or gaps around your concrete septic tank riser.
- Ensure the lid on your septic system fits securely with no gaps.
- Ensure that any inlet/outlet, venting, and inspection pipes relating to your septic system are not broken and are closed off with the appropriate fittings or covered with mesh screening.
- Trim bushes, mow lawns, and remove weeds to prevent mosquito harbourage.
- Septic tanks that overflow can result in waterlogged soil and pooling water. Ensure this is monitored and changes are made to mitigate pooling.
- If you have a septic tank that is no longer in use, fill in with dirt or gravel.
- Ensure your tank is pumped out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Failure to do so can cause the soakage trench to block up, creating a breeding site.
- Monitor the septic tank and effluent to determine whether mosquito larvae are present.

Larval control

You may find mosquito larvae in a septic tank during routine checks. Thoroughly check the entire tank considering the points above, and conduct maintenance and repairs as required.

More information on the maintenance of septic tank systems can be found on [the SA Health wastewater webpage](#).

Protect yourself

Information on how to protect yourself from mosquito borne disease can be found on [the SA Health Mozzies Suck webpage](#).