

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**June 17, 2016**

## **County to hold Fight the Bite forums to discuss Zika** *Mosquito-related issues key to combatting spread of the disease*

SHREWSBURY – Monmouth County officials will conduct a series of public health forums this summer to discuss the latest information about the Zika Virus and mosquito-related issues. The forums are aimed at promoting the County initiative to join the campaign to Fight the Bite against mosquito-borne diseases like the Zika Virus and other diseases.

The public forums will be hosted by the Monmouth County Library and sponsored by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Monmouth County Board of Health, Monmouth Regional Health Commission, Monmouth Health Consortium and the Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division.

“We must fight the bite. It is important that everyone know and understand the facts about the Zika virus. So come out to the forums and learn how to keep you and your family healthy and safe,” said Monmouth County Freeholder Deputy Director Serena DiMaso, liaison to the Mosquito Control Division. “These informative sessions are important because education is our first line of defense.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Zika Virus is primarily spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (more commonly known as pink eye). The illness usually presents itself within a week of being bitten by an infected mosquito. Those who contract the virus usually experience mild symptoms.

Due to the mild symptoms and effects of the virus it is possible someone who has been infected might not realize they have been infected. People usually don’t get sick enough to go to the hospital, and death due to the Zika virus is very rare, according to the CDC. Nonetheless it is important to note that a Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect known as microcephaly, as well as other severe fetal brain defects.

According to the CDC, once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

“This is an open invitation to anyone who lives, works or spends time in Monmouth County to attend one or more of these information forums. We are urging everyone to get the facts about this highly-publicized disease,” said Monmouth County Freeholder Director Thomas A. Arnone. “The mosquito that transmits the Zika virus has not arrived in Monmouth County, but that should not stop anyone from gaining the knowledge to fight the bite.”

Representatives will be on hand to discuss the current status of the Zika Virus in the United States and offer preventative information.

To identify ways residents can help reduce the mosquito population, Monmouth County has created a Mosquito Habitat Checklist which is available on [www.visitmonmouth.com/mosquito](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/mosquito).

For more information, call Monmouth County Mosquito Control at 732-542-3630 or visit [www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com) and click on the Fight the Bite button.

“Your best defense against the Zika virus is within your control. Eliminating mosquito breeding grounds in your yard and wearing protective clothing during the most active times of the day will help with your protection,” said Monmouth County Freeholder John P. Curley who oversees the County Board of Health. “The CDC, State, and County websites are full of information about mosquitos, and provide the knowledge you need to prevent the spread of the Zika Virus.”

The forums are scheduled for:

Thursday, June 30: 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

(presented by Shrewsbury Borough Board of Health, Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1, and Monmouth County Public Health Consortium)

Eastern Branch Library

1001 Route 35, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702-4398

732-683-8980

Friday, July 8: 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Monmouth County Library headquarters

125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07726-3249

Telephone: (732) 431-7220

Wednesday, July 13: 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Monmouth County Library headquarters

125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07726-3249

Telephone: 732-431-7220

Thursday, August 4: 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Eastern Branch Library

1001 Route 35, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702-4398

Telephone: 732-683-8980

For more information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika>

<http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/zika>

<http://visitmonmouth.com/mosquito>

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