



PRESS RELEASE

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Detection of Tiger Mosquito – No Cause for Public Concern

Public Health Gibraltar and the Environmental Agency can confirm that the mosquito of the species *Aedes albopictus*, also known as the tiger mosquito, has been detected in Gibraltar.

In June this year, it was announced that after 9 months of intensive surveillance, the tiger mosquito had not been found in Gibraltar. This has now changed with the confirmation yesterday of detection of the first tiger mosquito in the urban domestic environment within Gibraltar.

This finding alone does not however materially alter any health risks in Gibraltar and there is no immediate cause for public concern.

The Public Health Gibraltar was first alerted in January 2016 to the discovery of the mosquito in Malaga and Algeciras. Since then together with the Environmental Agency, it began working with international experts to mount surveillance in Gibraltar. WHO experts visited Gibraltar and given advice on setting traps and monitoring locations. However, no tiger mosquito had been detected until now.

The tiger mosquito is not native to Gibraltar and has not been previously found here. It is common in other countries where it transmits viral diseases like Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya. It is a domestic species, breeds in water in urban areas (water butts, blocked drains, rainwater gulleys, etc) and is able to reach high abundance around residential areas. It is also a day-time mosquito that aggressively bites humans.

Health risks to the public only arise if the virus causing these diseases is also present, which is not the case in Gibraltar. The virus can however be imported by travellers returning from an overseas country and if this happens, there is a risk of spread, but only if the mosquito bites within a small window period of about a week after the fever starts.

Public Health Gibraltar has been raising awareness of travel risk amongst travellers through its publication *A Factsheet for Travellers* and recommends the following precautions:



- Before travelling to affected areas, consult your doctor or seek advice from a travel clinic, especially if you have an immune disorder or severe chronic illness.
- If you are pregnant or are considering pregnancy, consider postponing non-essential travel.
- When staying in a mosquito-prone area, wear mosquito repellents and take mosquito bite prevention measures.
- If you have symptoms within three weeks of return from an affected country, contact your doctor.
- If you have been diagnosed with any of the diseases Zika, Dengue or Chikungunya, take strict mosquito bite prevention measures for 10 days after the fever starts.