

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Acting Minister for Health

Acting Minister for Health Infrastructure

Acting Minister for Ambulance Services



Thursday, 18 January 2024

## TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST BURULI ULCER THIS SUMMER

Victorians, particularly those living in or visiting coastal areas, are being encouraged to understand the risks of Buruli ulcer and take precautions against mosquito bites this summer, as cases continue to emerge across the state.

Acting Minister for Health Ingrid Stitt is urging precaution as new data highlights a growing number of Victorians are presenting with the infection, with 363 cases in 2023 – the highest number recorded since the infection emerged in Victoria in 2004.

While most of these cases are of low severity, it is important Victorians take precautions to avoid contracting the bacterial infection as warmer weather provides mosquitoes with an ideal breeding environment.

Buruli ulcer is an infection linked to mosquitos that can cause significant skin damage. The condition can be treated with antibiotics, making early diagnosis and treatment vital.

Symptoms for the infection include spots that look like insect bites, ulcers, painful lumps, limb swelling, redness of the skin and occasionally people can develop severe pain and fever.

The Allan Labor Government is urging Victorians to take simple and practical steps to reduce the risk of contracting Buruli ulcer, including:

- Covering up by wearing long, loose-fitting clothing – mosquitos can bite through tight clothing
- Using insect repellents containing Picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin
- Checking the repellent label before applying to children – spraying or rubbing repellent on children’s clothes is recommended, avoiding their skin especially their hands
- Limiting outdoor activity if there is a significant uptick in mosquitoes and using ‘knockdown’ fly spray, mosquito coils or plug-in repellent while sitting or eating outdoors
- Removing stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed around the home or a campsite
- Making sure windows are fitted with mosquito netting or screens
- Promptly wash any new scratches or cuts and protect with a dressing
- Wash exposed skin contaminated by soil or water after outdoor activities

The Labor Government has also invested \$1.1 million for the Beating Buruli project which aims to better understand how Buruli ulcer is transmitted and to determine additional effective ways to prevent and reduce infection.

More information on Buruli ulcer is available on the Better Health Channel [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/Buruli-ulcer#prevention-of-buruli-ulcer](https://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/Buruli-ulcer#prevention-of-buruli-ulcer)

### Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Health Ingrid Stitt

*“With cases of the Buruli ulcer on the rise, Victorians should understand the risks and take precautions – particularly those living or visiting coastal towns this summer.”*

*“Warmer weather provides mosquitos with an ideal breeding environment, Victorians should use an insect repellent with DEET, cover up when outdoors and practice good hygiene by washing new scratches and cuts.”*

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