

Mosquito sex change can help stop spread of Zika

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Two US scientists have proposed a new answer to the Zika epidemic: a sex-change operation for the mosquito that spreads the virus and other diseases. This genetic modification would turn deadly, blood-drinking females into harmless, nectar-sipping males.

The solution could potentially be used to limit not just Zika but malaria, dengue, yellow fever and other mosquito-borne infections such as chikungunya. However, the researchers accept there is a long way to go before the technique could be used in the field.

Since the spread of the Zika infection carried by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito from Africa across the Pacific to Brazil, Colombia and other Latin American nations, the British [House of Lords has recommended new investment](#) in GM weaponry, and the World Health Organisation in Geneva this week [called for both “old and new approaches”](#) to mosquito control.

Zach Adelman of Virginia Tech and his co-author Zhijian Tu, report in the journal [Trends in Parasitology](#) that a new discovery offers the promise of reducing or eliminating infection rates in all mosquito-borne infections

The duo last year reported the [identification of the first male-determining factor in mosquitoes](#). If this gene was turned on in female embryos, they developed male genitalia.

Read full, original post: [Genetic sex change for mosquitoes could stop the spread of Zika](#)