

GM mosquitoes: Conspiracists blame Bill Gates for first US malaria cases in two decades

Conspiracy theorists are blaming billionaire Bill Gates for a small number of malaria cases in the U.S.

The infections, four of which originated in Florida and one in Texas, represent the first cases of the disease to be detected domestically in two decades, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

While those sickened are believed to have been bitten by mosquitos in the U.S., many infections occur overseas and are caught when travelers return home. But the handful of cases has conspiracy theorists convinced that Gates, who has championed mosquitos genetically modified to not spread such diseases, is entirely to blame.

The billionaire's name has since become a trending topic on Twitter, where primarily right-wing users are amplifying the claim.

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Yet there are countless problems with the claims being spread by conspiracy theorists. For starters, as now noted in a context disclaimer on many of the conspiratorial tweets, only female mosquitos can bite and spread disease. All of the genetically-modified mosquitos part of the initiative funded by Gates [are male](#).

Secondly, [none of the mosquitos](#) were released in Texas. And the mosquitos that were [released in Florida](#) were dropped off in Monroe County, more than 160 miles away from the small cluster of four infections. The only other state where the program released mosquitos was California.

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