



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH / OSCEOLA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ISSUES PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY FOR MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASE
(Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) reported in Osceola County)

Public Urged to Protect Against Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Viruses

KISSIMMEE — The Osceola County Health Department (OsCHD) is advising residents that Osceola County is currently under a Public Health Advisory for mosquito-borne illnesses. Residents are urged to take precautions against mosquito bites.

Since the beginning of the year, four horses have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) including two during the third and fourth week in June. EEE is transmitted to mammals (i.e. humans and horses) through the bite of an infected mosquito. While no human cases of mosquito borne disease have been reported in Osceola County this year, everyone should be aware that mosquito-borne illnesses are still possible. Throughout the year, OsCHD works with local agencies, including Osceola County Mosquito Control, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and state universities, to monitor for the presence of illnesses carried by mosquitoes.

“Osceola County residents and visitors need to be aware of the increase in mosquitoes and take necessary steps to prevent against bites. There are simple measures everyone can follow,” said Belinda Johnson-Cornett, Administrator of the Osceola County Health Department.

Osceola County residents and visitors should remain diligent in protecting themselves from mosquito bites by following the "5 D's," which include:

Drainage – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

DEET – When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) are recommended. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options. Always read the manufacturer’s directions carefully before using a repellent, and make sure the repellent is age-appropriate.

Dress – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.

Dusk and Dawn – Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

- Clean out leaves, troughs, and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill drainage holes in those used in playgrounds.
- Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.
- Pick up all beverage containers and cups.
- Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.
- Pump out bilges on boats.
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week. Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

Symptoms of mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile virus (WNV), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness, and confusion. Physicians should contact their county health department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. Department of Health (DOH) laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne diseases.

Monitoring wild bird deaths can help officials track the spread of some mosquito-borne diseases. Anyone who discovers a dead bird is encouraged to report it via the Internet. The bird mortality reporting system is located on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's website at: www.MyFWC.com/bird/. Citizens may also report dead birds to the Osceola County Health Department by calling 407-742-8608 or the local Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission office.

For more information on mosquito-borne diseases, please visit the DOH Environmental Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/arboviral/index.html>, the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov, the Osceola County Mosquito Control website at <http://www.osceola.org/index.cfm?lsFuses=department/MosquitoControl> the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) website at <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/>, or contact your local health department.