

**Press Release**  
**July 8th, 2011**

**Denise Ward**  
**407.665.3384**

### **Seminole County Health Department Issues Mosquito-Borne Illness Advisory**

**Seminole**—Due to recent reports of mosquito-borne disease activity in areas of Seminole County, a mosquito-borne illness advisory has been issued by the Seminole County Health Department. Several sentinel chickens in Seminole County have tested positive for West Nile virus. Sentinel activity is an indication that West Nile virus is in the community and transmission to humans is possible.

The Seminole County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes that may cause encephalitis disease. 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.

“It is important for people to avoid bites from mosquitoes. Prevention is especially important during the summer rainy season when mosquito activity peaks and participation in outdoor activities is common. Simple steps can be followed to reduce the chances of contracting a mosquito-borne illness,” said Mike Napier, Director of the Seminole County Health Department.

Seminole County Mosquito Control and the Seminole County Health Department continue surveillance and prevention efforts and encourage everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure by following the Department of Health recommendations.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, you should remember “Drain and Cover”:

Drain standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition with appropriate chlorination. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

Cover skin with clothing or repellent.

- Clothing - Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves if outside when mosquitoes are active. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- Repellent - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.

1. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
2. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.

Cover doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.

- Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

#### Tips on Repellent Use

- Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before you apply a repellent.
- Some repellents are not suitable for children.
- Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET are generally recommended.
- Other EPA-approved repellents contain Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. These products are generally available at local pharmacies. Look for active ingredients to be listed on the product label.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but not under clothing.
- In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is age-appropriate. According to the CDC, mosquito repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under the age of 3 years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than 2 months old.
- Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing.
- Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

For further information, see the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/qa/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm) or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria, and dengue. Monitoring wild bird deaths can help officials track the spread of some mosquito-borne diseases. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the web site <http://www.myfwc.com/bird/> through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

For more information on mosquito-borne diseases visit the DOH Environmental Public Health web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html> or contact the Seminole County Health Department at (407) 665-3000.

###