

Mission:  
To protect, promote & improve the health  
of all people in Florida through integrated  
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott  
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH URGES FLORIDIANS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES  
AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS**

*~ West Nile Virus Case Confirmed in Walton County ~*

**TALLAHASSEE**—The Florida Department of Health is urging Floridians and visitors to protect themselves against West Nile Virus. The Department of Health today confirmed the first case of West Nile virus illness in Florida for 2015 in an adult female resident of Walton County. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that causes mild to severe illness, and there have been 38 other states with confirmed cases in 2015.

“I encourage Floridians and visitors to take steps to prevent mosquito bites that can lead to illness,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Stay safe by draining any standing water near or in your home, making sure that screens are intact, and keeping your skin covered with clothing and mosquito repellent.”

Most people with West Nile virus infections, approximately 80 percent, have no symptoms. In those people who develop them, most experience a mild illness with conditions like headache, fever, pain and fatigue. These typically appear between two and 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

People over the age of 50 and individuals with weakened immune systems, especially transplant recipients and HIV-infected individuals, seem to be at increased risk for severe disease. There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus, and most mild infections are typically overcome with little or no medical intervention within a matter of weeks. Those experiencing severe side effects should seek medical attention immediately.

The department continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, Malaria and Dengue. Residents are encouraged to report dead birds to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website at [www.myfwc.com/bird](http://www.myfwc.com/bird).

The department has put together broadcast-quality downloadable videos in both English and Spanish for use by the media on West Nile virus. You can find those at [www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/index.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/index.html). There are also a number of educational materials, including a Frequently Asked Questions document and historical data on the illness. You’ll also find basic information about the importance of taking precautions to avoid mosquito-borne illness in a press release put out by the

department earlier this summer at [www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2015/06/061215-mosquito.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2015/06/061215-mosquito.html).

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The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).