

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Cheryl L. Dunn
772-794-7440

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND INDIAN RIVER MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY--This is to advise that there has been increased mosquito-borne disease activity. Indian River County Health Department and Indian River Mosquito Control District are urging residents to be diligent in their personal mosquito protection. West Nile Virus (WNV) infection is increasing in sentinel chickens in Indian River County. Surveillance data from the Indian River Mosquito Control District indicates that there have now been WNV-infected sentinel chickens found in 6 of the 8 county sentinel flocks. Two-thirds of the chickens in two of these sentinel flocks have been infected in recent weeks. The six affected flocks are dispersed around the county and it is assumed that potential for human infection exists county-wide. No human West Nile cases have been documented in Indian River County since the arrival of WNV in 2001. However, West Nile Virus infections of District sentinel chickens is documented most years and the virus is considered to be a permanent resident of the county (in infected wild birds and mosquitoes).

Infected sentinel chickens are an indication that West Nile virus is in the community and transmission to humans is possible. The key to avoiding infection from mosquito bites is prevention and you can make a difference. Prevention is especially important during the summer and autumn rainy season, which coincides with peak mosquito activity. Indian River Mosquito Control District monitors mosquito activity and develops effective pest and disease reduction methodologies to control their activity. Mosquitoes may carry diseases including West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria and dengue.

The risk of transmission to humans has been increased. Indian River County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes that may cause encephalitis disease. Indian River Mosquito Control District continues to monitor the local West Nile virus situation in collaboration with Indian County Health Department and encourages everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure. Cheryl Dunn, Environmental Manager for the Indian River County Health Department says "residents can protect themselves and their families by remembering to 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 and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER skin with clothing or repellent

CLOTHING: If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long sleeves.

REPELLENT: Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months

COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out.

Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before applying a repellent to skin. 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.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- 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.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites Around the Home

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

- Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.
- 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 West Nile virus 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. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

For more information see:

- DOH's Environmental Public Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html> or call Indian River County Health Department at 772-794-7440.
- Indian River Mosquito Control District website at <http://www.irmosquito.com/> or call 772-562-2393

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