

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA – MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ALERT UPDATE

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA — The Escambia County Health Department continues its mosquito-borne illness alert for Escambia County, Florida. One additional human case of West Nile virus (WNV) has been confirmed in Escambia County, Florida. The identification of this new case brings the total number of diagnosed WNV cases to thirteen for 2012. There is still some risk that additional persons could become infected with WNV from mosquito bites.

Mosquitoes infected with WNV can bite and infect humans. About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop serious illness. Symptoms of infection can range from mild to severe including development of diseases such as meningitis or encephalitis. People with weakened immune systems and individuals over 50 may be at higher risk of the most severe form of the infection.

The abnormally high number of confirmed cases reaffirms the increased risk of contracting WNV for everyone in Escambia County, Florida. Since most people who contract the disease have mild or no symptoms, there are most likely numerous undiagnosed cases throughout the area. All Escambia County, Florida residents and visitors should take precautions to limit their exposure to mosquitoes.

Dr. John Lanza, Escambia County Health Department Director remarks: “With the continuation of the recent cooler fall weather, we expect less mosquito activity in our area and anticipate diagnosing fewer new cases of West Nile Virus in Escambia County, Florida. However, residents should continue to take precautions against mosquito bites until the alert is lifted for the County.”

“DRAIN & COVER” TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES.

- **DRAIN** water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots, or any other container where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
 - Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances, and other items that are not being used.
 - Empty and clean birdbaths and pets’ water bowls at one or two times a week.
 - Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water. Pump out bilges on boats.
 - Maintain swimming pools in good condition and keep appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.
- **COVER** skin with clothing or insect repellent.

- Wear shoes, socks, and long pants & long-sleeves. (This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.)
 - Choose insect repellents with DEET(N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.
 - Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before applying a repellent.
 - In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is appropriate: DEET is not recommended on children younger than 2 months old, and oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children less than 3 years old.
 - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always read label directions carefully. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months of age.
 - Do not allow young children to apply insect repellent to themselves. Do have an adult apply it. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
 - Apply insect repellent to exposed skin or onto clothing, but not under clothing. Do not apply repellent to the eyes or mouth, cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
 - If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to clothing or gear. Always follow the manufacturer's directions.
- **COVER** doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of the house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

The Escambia County Health Department, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health, will continue to perform surveillance for mosquito-borne infections. The Florida Department of Health continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria, and dengue.

For more information on West Nile virus visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>.

The Florida Department of Health's surveillance information is found at

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html>. Local communications and information may be found at www.EscambiaHealth.com.

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