

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ESCAMBIA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ISSUES MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY**

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA—The Escambia County Health Department would like to remind the public to practice careful mosquito bite prevention practices, especially during this very rainy summer season. The first human case of West Nile Virus this year has been reported to the Health Department. This indicates that there is an imminent risk of additional persons becoming infected with West Nile Virus. Being bitten by mosquitoes may result in infection with the virus. Symptoms of infection can range from mild to severe, including development of diseases such as meningitis or encephalitis. Those most at risk for the infection are those who spend a lot of time outdoors, especially during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Individuals who are immune compromised may be at higher risk of the most severe form of the infection.

Dr. Susan Turner, Associate Director for the Escambia County Health Department advises: "A human case of West Nile Virus indicates a high risk of becoming infected with the virus. It is especially important to protect yourself and those you love from mosquito bites right now." The Escambia County Health Department encourages everyone to take all precautions to limit their exposure to mosquitoes by following Florida Department of Health recommendations. The Escambia County Health Department, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health, will continue to perform surveillance for mosquito-borne infections. The Escambia County Mosquito Control Division has been notified. They are evaluating their mosquito surveillance data to determine the appropriate methodology for enhancing their mosquito control activities.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, "**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—Stay indoors when mosquitoes are active; if you must go outside:

- CLOTHING - Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves. 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.
- Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET (N,N-diethyl-mtoluamide), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
- 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 screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.
- Keep doors and windows closed if screens are not present.

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 US Environmental Protection Agency-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 three years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than two 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.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing.
- Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

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, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a comprehensive set of information and resources, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>. You may also visit the Florida Department of Health's website for Florida surveillance information, at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html>. The Escambia County Health Department's website is www.EscambiaHealth.com.

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