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## HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES ADVISORY



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**Sarasota** —The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) today advised residents there has been an increase in mosquito-borne disease activity in areas of Sarasota County.

Pools of mosquitos trapped in Sarasota County have tested positive for West Nile Virus. A pool is a collection of no more than 50 mosquitoes. Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) staff has been trapping and collecting mosquitos at several sites throughout the county this summer as part of Sarasota County’s mosquito management plan. Trapped mosquitos are then sent to a lab where they are tested for West Nile virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus, and St. Louis Encephalitis virus.

The pools of mosquitos that tested positive for West Nile Virus were collected in the East Venice area. Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services has already treated the area.

This is the first time in 2018 that the virus has been detected in the area. No human cases of West Nile virus have been reported in Sarasota County at this time. Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services and DOH-Sarasota continue surveillance and prevention efforts.

West Nile Virus affects the central nervous system and can cause serious illness. However, about 80 percent of people who become infected with the virus will not show any symptoms.

DOH-Sarasota reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes and to take basic precautions to help limit exposure.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, you should remember 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 - 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, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, and IR3535 are effective.
  - Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.

### **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 (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) are generally recommended. Other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved repellents contain picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (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.

### **COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.**

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

Residents, visitors and medical professionals with general questions about West Nile Virus are asked to call our Epidemiology department at (941) 861-2873.

For more information on what repellent is right for you, consider using the Environmental Protection Agency's search tool to help you choose skin-applied repellent products:

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/#searchform>.

The Department continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis

encephalitis, malaria, chikungunya and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's site - <http://legacy.myfwc.com/bird/default.asp>. For more information, visit DOH's website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/%5C/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html> or contact your county health department.

For more information about Sarasota County Mosquito Management Services please visit <https://www.scgov.net/government/health-and-human-services/mosquito-management-services>, or call (941) 861-5000.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. For more information about the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County please visit us at [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org).

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