

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEON AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES ISSUE
MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY**

*--Media availability today, 2 p.m., 2965 Municipal Way, Tallahassee, with
Dr. Homer J. Rice, Administrator, Leon County Health Department--*

Tallahassee and Monticello--This is to advise you that there has been increased mosquito-borne disease activity in areas of **Leon and Jefferson** counties. A resident of Leon County, who also visited Jefferson County during the time he was bitten, has tested positive for West Nile virus. In addition, we have one presumed positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEE) in Leon County's sentinel chicken flock. Although none of Jefferson County's mosquito pools has tested positive for any mosquito-borne disease, Jefferson recently had a horse test positive for EEE infection. **The risk of transmission to humans has been increased.**

Both county health departments remind residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. County mosquito control offices and the health departments continue surveillance and prevention efforts and encourage everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure by following the Department of Health recommendations.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, you should remember "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 (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), 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 screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.

PROTECT PETS from mosquito bites.

- Mosquitoes can transmit heartworms to your dog and cat, so please call your veterinarian about the best precautions to take for your pets. Although curable if caught early enough, heartworm treatment is expensive and difficult for animals.

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.

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the web site for Surveillance of Wild-bird Die-offs located at <http://www.myfwc.com/bird/>. For more information, visit DOH's Environmental Public Health web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html> or call your local county health department's environmental health division.

Leon County Environmental Health Division: 850-606-8350
Leon County Mosquito Control: 850-606-1400

Jefferson County Environmental Health Division: 850-342-0170 ext. 5
Jefferson County Mosquito Control: 850-997-3343

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