

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY

TAMPA, FLA. – The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County (DOH-Hillsborough) advises residents and visitors that there has been an increase in mosquito-borne disease activity in northwestern Hillsborough County. Eastern Equine Encephalitis has been detected in two horses, heightening the risk of transmission to humans. Hillsborough County Mosquito Control and DOH-Hillsborough continue surveillance and prevention efforts.

DOH-Hillsborough reminds residents and visitors to take basic precautions to limit exposure, in order to mitigate the risk of being bitten.

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, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rainwater has collected.
- Discard old tires, bottles, pots, broken appliances and other items not being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pets’ water bowls at least twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and 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, 2-undecanone and IR3535 are effective.
 - Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.
- Check and repair screens on doors and windows. Keep them closed and use air conditioning when possible.
- Make sure window screens are in good repair to reduce the chance of mosquitoes indoors.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Apply insect repellent that contains DEET (10-30%), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535.
- Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5%. Do not apply permethrin directly to skin. Some sports clothing and gear come pretreated with permethrin.
- Use insect repellent approved by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) on exposed skin and clothing. EPA’s helpful search tool can help you find the product that best suits your needs.
- Follow instructions on the product label, especially if you’re applying it to children.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but not under clothing.
- Always follow instructions when applying insect repellent to children and do not use repellents with DEET on babies younger than 2 months or oil of lemon eucalyptus on children under 3 years 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.

Travel Tips

Mosquitoes spread viruses and parasites that cause diseases. Before you travel to areas wherein mosquito-borne diseases are found, talk to your healthcare provider about your health concerns, and ask about malaria prevention medicine.

Mosquitoes need standing water to reproduce, so you may want to consider planning your travels to tropical regions during the dry season when mosquitos are less prevalent. That's not to say that there are no mosquitoes outside of the rainy season, but higher temperatures and fewer puddles in which to breed, make them considerably less active.

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About the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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