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HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES ADVISORY



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St. Lucie County, FL—The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County (DOH-St. Lucie) today advised residents there has been an increase in mosquito-borne disease activity in northern and western areas of St. Lucie County.

Several sentinel chickens have tested positive for West Nile virus infection. The risk of transmission to humans has increased in St. Lucie County. Mosquito Control and DOH-St. Lucie continue surveillance and prevention efforts.

According to the CDC, mosquitoes are the world's deadliest animal, and kills more people, than any other creature in the entire world. "Today we send this press release as a reminder, we are in hurricane season and the mosquito and tick population has become more dominant, with rain almost every day in St. Lucie. It is important that you take preventative measures for you and your family," said Clint Sperber, Health Officer and Administrator of the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

DOH-St. Lucie 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.
- Flush water-holding plants, such as bromeliads regularly with water.
- 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, 2-undecanone 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, 2-undecanone 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 or para-menthane-diol 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.

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 www.floridahealth.gov/%5C/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html or contact your county health department.

About the Florida Department of Health

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