

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BAY COUNTY –MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY**

BAY COUNTY--This is to advise that there has been increased mosquito-borne disease activity in areas of **BAY** County. Several of our sentinel chicken flocks/horses/mosquito pools have tested positive for West Nile/EEE/SLE virus. **The risk of transmission to humans has been increased.**

BAY County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes that may cause encephalitis disease. **BAY** County Mosquito Control and the health department 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, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rainwater has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that are not 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 do not 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, 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.

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 EPA-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 3 years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than 2 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 Department of Health (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 <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/indeBay.html> or call the Bay County Health Department at 850-872-4455 ext. 1269.

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