



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

DeSoto County Department of Health

Mary Kay Burns, B.S.N., M.B.A.
Administrator

34 South Baldwin Avenue
Arcadia, Florida 34266

For Immediate Release
September 22, 2010

Contact: Adam DuBois, Public Information, DeSoto County Health Department

DESOTO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS AND OTHER MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES

DeSoto County, FL — Florida Department of Health (DOH) officials emphasize the importance of protecting themselves against mosquito-borne diseases. As we move into peak mosquito activity months, two cases of horses infected by West Nile virus have already been confirmed for DeSoto County. These two animal cases raise concern that residents may become ill if bitten by an infected mosquito.

DeSoto County Health Department advises the public to remain diligent in protecting themselves from mosquito bites by using the "5 D's," which include:

- **Dusk and Dawn** – Avoid being outdoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are more likely to bite.
- **Dress** – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.
- **DEET** – Use repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide). Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535 and permethrin are other repellent options, always following instructions and verifying the product is age appropriate for use.
- **Drainage** – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

"Working together to protect ourselves will help ensure that we continue to stay healthy as a community," said Mary Kay Burns, Administrator of the DeSoto County Health Department.

Symptoms of mosquito-borne illness may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness, body aches, and confusion. Physicians should contact their county health department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. Department of Health laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

For more information contact Adam DuBois at 863-993-4601 extension 105.

###



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always **read label directions carefully** for the approved usage before applying a repellent to skin. Some repellents are not suitable for children.
- Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET are generally recommended. Mosquito repellents containing picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 can also be applied directly on skin. Permethrin can be used on clothing. Repellents 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.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- **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.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

- Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.
- Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.
- Pick up all beverage containers and cups.
- Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.
- Pump out bilges on boats.
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.
- Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.