

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott  
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Wesley Asbell  
(352) 463-3120

**THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
GILCHRIST COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES MOSQUITO- BORNE ILLNESSES  
ADVISORY**

**TRENTON** – The Gilchrist County Health Department (GCHD) emphasizes the importance of protection against mosquito-borne diseases after receiving notification that three horses in the Bell area have recently tested positive for eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEEV). A total of five horse cases of eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) have been identified in Gilchrist County this calendar year. EEE is caused by a virus transmitted by mosquitoes and can infect mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles. The virus can be transmitted from birds to humans by mosquitoes. The virus causes severe illness in humans and horses. A vaccination is available for horses against EEEV. None of the 3 most recent horses had received EEEV vaccinations.

Symptoms of EEE in humans may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. Physicians should contact the local county health department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness.

The Gilchrist County Health Department continues surveillance and prevention efforts and encourages everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure to mosquitoes by following the health department's recommendations. The Gilchrist County Health Department is also recommending horse and livestock owners contact their veterinarian about vaccinations against mosquito borne diseases.

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, 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.

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/index.html> or call your local county health department.

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