
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 7, 2010

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**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS
ADVISORY FOR WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTION**

Indian River County — Indian River County Health Department is issuing a mosquito-borne illness advisory for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection and warning residents to be diligent in their personal mosquito protection. WNV infection has increased significantly in sentinel chickens in Indian River County. Surveillance data from the Indian River Mosquito Control District indicates that there have now been WNV infected sentinel chickens found in 7 of the 8 county sentinel flocks. Six of the sentinel flocks had 50% or more of the sentinel chickens positive indicating both widespread and progressively worsening activity.

In the past 4 years (2006-2009), there have been no West Nile Virus positive seroconversions in sentinel chicken flocks in Indian River County. Indian River Mosquito Control District has confirmed 23 WNV seroconversions in sentinel chicken flocks. There is also increased WNV activity in sentinel chickens in Brevard, Martin and St. Lucie Counties, with Martin and Osceola Counties under a Mosquito-Borne Illness Advisory. There has been one human WNV infection reported in Osceola County.

Sentinel activity is an indication that West Nile Virus is in the community and transmission to humans is possible. WNV is not spread from person to person. The key to avoiding infection from mosquito bites is prevention and you can make a difference. Prevention is especially important during the summer and autumn rainy season, which coincides with peak mosquito activity. Indian River Mosquito Control District monitors mosquito and virus activity and implements appropriate methodologies to control pest and disease-transmitting mosquitoes. Mosquitoes may carry diseases including West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria and dengue.

Indian River County Health Department advises the public to protect themselves from mosquito bites by following the “5 D’s,” which are:

- **Dusk and Dawn** – Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are biting. When indoors use your air conditioner or use screens on windows and doors.
- **Dress** – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.
- **DEET** – Use repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3methylbenzamide). Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535 and Permethrin are other repellent options.
- **Drainage** – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. Standing water can collect in small buckets, animal drinking bowls, bird baths, potted plants and bases, ornamental fountains, uncovered boats, garbage cans, coolers, discarded tires and clogged roof gutters.



Follow these tips for correct repellent use:

- Read label directions carefully for the approved usage before applying a repellent to skin. Some repellents are not suitable for children. 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.
- 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.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but not under clothing.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.

Most people who become sick from mosquitoes have mild symptoms like headache, fever, dizziness and fatigue, but more severe symptoms are possible. There is no specific medication or vaccine for WNV. Anyone with severe symptoms should consult their primary care physician or seek immediate medical care. High fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, coma and paralysis are severe symptoms and signs of inflammation in or around the brain. Severe disease requires hospitalization and can be life altering or even fatal. 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 on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit Department of Health's Environmental Health Web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html> or call the Indian River County Health Department at 772-794-7440.

For more information on Indian River Mosquito Control District and their activities including spray trucks, larval control, source reduction, tire collection, disease surveillance, and research visit <http://irmosquito.org/> or call the Mosquito Control District at 772-562-2393.

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