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MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY IN EFFECT FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY

West Nile Virus case confirmed in Escambia County



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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) has issued a mosquito-borne illness advisory. The first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2016 was confirmed in a resident in Escambia County, FL.

The Escambia County Mosquito Control Division and FDOH-Escambia continue surveillance and prevention efforts. There is heightened concern that other Escambia County residents and visitors may become ill from being bitten by an infected mosquito.

According to CDC, most people (70-80 percent) infected with WNV show no symptoms at all. About one in five people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of illness recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Less than one percent of people who are infected will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues). Older adults and persons with weakened immune systems and/or other chronic illnesses are at the greatest risk for severe illness.

“If you suspect you are ill with a West Nile virus infection, please visit your doctor,” says FDOH-Escambia Director, Dr. John J. Lanza. “The most important thing we can do is take precautions to prevent infection.”

Mosquitoes are known carriers of WNV, and other disease-causing viruses. To protect yourself from mosquitoes, you should remember to drain and cover.

Drain standing water.

- 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, bottles, pots, broken appliances and other items not being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pets' water bowls at least twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

Cover skin with clothing or repellent;

- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves when mosquitoes are most prevalent.
- Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
- Always use repellents according to the label. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered repellents with 10-30 percent DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.
- Re-apply mosquito repellent as often as needed to prevent mosquito landings and bites.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.
- Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing. Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children.

Cover doors and windows.

- Place screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.
- Repair broken screens.
- Keep unscreened windows and doors closed.

For more information, contact the FDOH-Escambia at 850-595-6700 or visit www.EscambiaHealth.com.

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