

Mission:

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



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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CHIKUNGUNYA FEVER ALERT LIFTED IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

PALM BEACH COUNTY – The Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County lifted the mosquito borne **Alert** status, in effect since July, for Chikungunya Fever today.

Dr. Danielle Stanek, Florida Department of Health Medical Epidemiologist, said, “Sporadic arbovirus (mosquito borne) cases can occur at any time in Florida due to our mild weather so advisories and alerts are issued when the risk is elevated.” Dr. Stanek added that the reduced mosquito population and cooler temperatures signal a return to a lower risk of exposure.

The decision to lift the **Alert** was based on two main factors:

- The last set of sentinel chicken samples for this year have tested negative.
- Palm Beach County Mosquito Control reports the mosquito numbers in the county have declined to a fairly low level.

Chikungunya is a disease spread by bites from infected *Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. *Aedes* mosquitoes are day-biters which can lay eggs in very small water containers. Early detection of the symptoms and preventing mosquitoes from multiplying and biting will help prevent the disease.

“Our Department continues to conduct monitoring for signs of additional locally acquired cases of chikungunya,” said Dr. Alina Alonso, Director, Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County. “Everyone should continue to take precautions and fight the bite of mosquitoes.” This includes, surveying your property and removing standing water from anything that can hold water, covering-up with long sleeves and using insect repellent before you go outside, and covering your doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out.

Symptoms of chikungunya include sudden onset of high fever (>102°F), multiple joint pains, mainly in the arms and legs, headache, muscle pain, back pain and rash. Symptoms appear on average three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most patients feel better after a few days or weeks, however, some people may develop long-term effects. Complications are more common in infants younger than a year old; those older than 65; and people with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

“If you experience symptoms of chikungunya fever, such as high fever, rash, severe muscle joint pain following the bite of mosquitoes, consult with your health care provider immediately and protect yourself against further mosquito bites,” cautioned Dr. Alonso. A person infected with chikungunya should stay indoors as much as possible until symptoms subside to prevent further transmission.

To learn more about the chikungunya virus, visit www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/chikungunya.html and www.cdc.gov/chikungunya

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