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HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES ALERT



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Tampa, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County has upgraded the mosquito-borne illness advisory to an alert for Hillsborough County due to the confirmation of an asymptomatic case of West Nile virus being identified in the county.

There has been one confirmed human case of West Nile Virus in the county, and eight confirmed human cases in Florida in 2015.

“The addition of an asymptomatic case being discovered in the community is an indication that we could potentially see more human cases in the future,” said Dr. Douglas Holt, MD, director of the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County. “Residents and visitors should take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes and to limit exposure to mosquito-borne illnesses.”

Hillsborough County Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control and the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County continue surveillance and prevention efforts. There is heightened concern that other Hillsborough County residents and visitors may become ill from being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Infection with West Nile Virus is either asymptomatic (no symptoms) in around 80 percent of infected people, or can lead to more severe case of West Nile Virus. Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, occasionally with a skin rash (on the trunk of the body) and swollen lymph glands.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes, you should remember to “**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, 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 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 and cover doors and windows.

- Wear comfortable shoes, socks, and long pants and long sleeves when mosquitoes are most prevalent.
- Apply mosquito repellent to exposed 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-mentane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.
- Use mosquito netting to protect 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.
- Place screens on windows, doors, porches and patios. Always repair broken screens.

For more information contact the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County at 813-307-8000, or visit www.hillsborough.floridahealth.gov/. The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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