

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WALTON COUNTY- MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ADVISORY**

- Numbers serve as important reminder for Florida residents and visitors to take proactive measures against mosquitoes -

WALTON COUNTY — This is to advise that there has been increased mosquito-borne disease activity in areas of Walton County. Several sentinel chickens have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). **The risk of transmission to humans has increased.**

Walton County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes that may cause encephalitis disease. Walton County Mosquito Control, South Walton Mosquito Control and the health department continue surveillance and prevention efforts and encourage everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure by following the department of health recommendations.

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, 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 US Environmental Protection Agency-approved repellents contain Picaridin, oil of

lemon eucalyptus, or IR 3535. 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.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern equine Encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria, and dengue. Resident of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission web site at <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 the Walton County Health Department at 850-892-8021.

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