

**Mission:**

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



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

For Immediate Release  
August 1, 2013

**Contact:**

Steve Huard, Public Information Officer  
Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County  
(813) 298-2024, Cell

## The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County reminds residents to Protect Themselves Against Mosquito-Borne Disease

TAMPA – The Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County has confirmed that a horse located in the northwestern part of Hillsborough County was infected with locally acquired Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The horse was most likely infected mid-July and has since been euthanized.

The last human case of locally acquired Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Hillsborough County was in March, 2013.

“Preventing mosquito bites can protect your health,” said Dr. Douglas Holt, MD, Director, Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County. “That’s why it’s important for residents and visitors alike to protect themselves from mosquitoes and the illnesses they can transmit”.

Hillsborough County has been under a Mosquito-Borne advisory since March 25. Mosquito-Borne Illness advisories are declared when human cases of locally-acquired endemic or exotic arboviral disease have been confirmed, or when evidence of intense virus transmission activity has been detected in animal surveillance systems.

According to Dr. Holt, it’s important for residents to stay vigilant year round because arboviruses’ like EEE, and West Nile Virus remain active in our community year round.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis is a rare disease that is caused by a virus spread by infected mosquitoes. The EEE virus is one of a group of mosquito-transmitted viruses that can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). In the United States, approximately 5-10 EEE cases are reported annually. EEE is only transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, and does not occur directly from person to person.

According to Amanda Pullman, Epidemiologist, Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County, initial symptoms may include fever, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea. The disease can also progress to more severe symptoms such as altered mental status, seizures, coma and death.

The Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County is working closely with Hillsborough County Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control to reduce the risk of mosquito-borne disease throughout the county.

The Florida Department of Health, Hillsborough County continues to remind all residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Hillsborough County Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control and the health department continue surveillance and prevention efforts and encourage everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure by following these simple, yet effective recommendations.

For additional information or to request mosquito services, visit the Hillsborough County Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control website at: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/index.aspx?NID=604>.

The public is advised to ***DRAIN and COVER***

Stop mosquitoes from living and multiplying around your home or business. Protect yourself from mosquito bites and the diseases they carry.

Drain standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

**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:** The water balance (pool chemistry) of swimming pools. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

Cover your skin with clothing and use mosquito repellent.

**CLOTHING:** If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long sleeves.

**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. Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

More information on preventing mosquito-borne disease please visit:

<http://www.floridashealth.com/Environment/medicine/arboviral/Prevention.html>

The Florida Department of Health continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including WNV and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria and dengue. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, please visit The Florida Department of Health's Environmental Health Website at <http://doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html>, and for more on Eastern Equine Encephalitis please visit <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/medicine/arboviral/EasternEquine.html>, or the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/EasternEquineEncephalitis/index.html>.

###