



Jeb Bush
Governor

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Secretary

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Mosquitoes Still Active Public Health officials emphasize Personal Protective Measures

Sarasota County Health Department and Sarasota County Mosquito Management officials continue to report increases in mosquito activity. This week, three additional sentinel chickens tested positive for West Nile Virus, which brings the countywide total to 43 this year. West Nile Virus activity has been reported in each of the eleven chicken flocks located in strategic points throughout the county, which gives evidence that the risk of contracting West Nile Virus is widespread.

Many mosquito species can harbor the West Nile virus. Areas that have standing water are considered prime habitats for the major mosquito types known to transmit the virus to people. Eggs hatch within 24 hours and flying, biting adult mosquitoes emerge 5-6 days later. With frequent rains, this cycle is constantly repeated. *As long as there is standing water, the mosquitoes will breed and pose a threat to human health.*

Signs of mosquito-caused illnesses are often flu-like (i.e. headache, nausea) symptoms. In more severe cases, confusion, seizures and coma may result. Persons most at risk include senior citizens, infants and those who have a weakened immune system. The Department of Health laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne (arboviral) disease. Physicians should submit serum and, if available, cerebrospinal fluid samples to either the Tampa or Jacksonville Department of Health laboratories.

Sarasota County and Florida Department of Health officials continue to remind the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These should include the “**5 D’s and 1 S**” for prevention:

- **Dusk and Dawn** -- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood, for many species this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
 - **Dress** -- Wear clothing that covers skin.
 - **DEET** -- When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-methyltoluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) are recommended. Products with concentrations up to 30% DEET are generally recommended for most situations. (It is not recommended to use DEET on children less than 2 months old. Instead, infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting used over carriers when mosquitoes are present). If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Always read the manufacturer's directions carefully before you put on a repellent.
 - **Drainage** -- Check your home to rid it of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
- AND**
- **Screens** -- Make sure that windows remain closed or are sealed completely by screens at night.

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Elimination of breeding sites is another key to prevention. Sarasota County Mosquito Management officials are available to assist residents in identifying and eliminating places around their homes where mosquitoes gather and breed.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

- Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.
- Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.
- Pick up all beverage containers and cups.
- Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.
- Pump out bilges on boats.
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.
- Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

Residents should contact Sarasota County Mosquito Management about educational opportunities, to report a mosquito problem or to find out when and where there will be spraying for biting, adult mosquitoes. The telephone number is 861-9740 or log on to Mosquito Management's website at <http://scgov.net/>.

The Department of Health (DOH) continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile (WN) virus, Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria, and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the Web site <http://www.wildflorida.org/bird> or call Sarasota County Health Department's Environmental Health Services Office at 861-6133. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's Environmental Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/hsee/arbo/index.htm>, or call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782. For health questions or medical questions related to mosquitoes, call the Sarasota County Health Department's Communicable Disease Control Office at 861-2873.