



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **MEDICAL ALERT ISSUED FOR JACKSON COUNTY**

Today, County Health Department Administrator Jimmy Rigsby announced that Florida Department of Health (DOH) Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., has issued a medical alert for Jackson County because of increased mosquito-borne illness activity in Jackson County and human cases of West Nile Virus in surrounding counties.

“Even though there are no human cases of mosquito-borne illnesses in Jackson County at this time, it remains important that residents and visitors take precautions against mosquitoes bites,” said Rigsby. “A medical alert is a tool to heighten public and physician awareness to ensure adequate identification and treatment of mosquito-borne illnesses.”

Health Department officials are issuing the following new lab results: One Blue Jay submitted on 9-30-03, from Hwy 71, South of Marianna and one horse submitted on 9-13-03, from Grand Ridge tested positive for West Nile Virus. This brings our total WNV activity to 32 wild birds, six Sentinel Chickens, and one horse so far this year. All tested positive for the virus according to lab results from the Florida Department of Health’s Tampa Branch Lab. Mosquitoes that bite infected birds transmit West Nile Virus.

Physicians should contact the County Health Department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

DOH continues to advise 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-meta-toluamide, 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.

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

#### **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.

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 by calling their local county health department. 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>, call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or your local county health department.

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