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HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ALERT FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Additional Human Case of West Nile Virus Infection Confirmed



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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) has issued a mosquito-borne illness alert. The second human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2016 was confirmed in a resident in Escambia County, FL.

The Escambia County Mosquito Control Division and FDOH-Escambia continue surveillance and prevention efforts. However, there is heightened concern that other Escambia County residents and visitors may become ill from being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Mosquitoes are known carriers of WNV, and other disease-causing viruses. To protect yourself from mosquitoes and the diseases that they carry, you should Drain and Cover.

Drain standing water.

- 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 do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

Cover skin with clothing or repellent;

- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves when mosquitoes are most prevalent.
- Apply mosquito repellent to bare 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-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection.
- Re-apply mosquito repellent as often as needed to prevent mosquito landings and bites.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.
- Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing. Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children.

Cover doors and windows.

- Place screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.
- Repair broken screens.

- Keep unscreened windows and doors closed.

According to CDC, most people (70-80 percent) infected with WNV show no symptoms at all. About one in five people who are infected will develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with this type of illness recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.

Less than one percent of people who are infected will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues). Older adults and persons with weakened immune systems and/or other chronic illnesses are at the greatest risk for severe illness.

The Department continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria, chikungunya, and dengue.

For more information, contact the FDOH-Escambia at 850-595-6683 or visit EscambiaHealth.com.

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