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Wakulla County Health Department Urges Residents to Protect Themselves from Mosquito-Borne Illness

Crawfordville - Wakulla County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes that may cause encephalitis disease. The Health Department continues surveillance and prevention efforts and encourages everyone to take basic precautions to help limit exposure by following the Department of Health recommendations.

Your personal mosquito protection efforts should include the “5 D’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 most of your 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. Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are other repellent options.
- **Drainage** -- Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

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 virus infections, Eastern equine encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, malaria, and dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the web site <http://myfwc.com/bird/>. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH’s Environmental Health web site at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/arboviral/index.htm>, call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or call the Wakulla County Health Department at (850) 926-2558.

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