

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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– MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ALERT LIFTED –

Escambia County Health Department Lifts Alert for West Nile Virus

PENSACOLA – Escambia County (Florida) Health Department Director Dr. John Lanza today lifted the mosquito-borne illness advisory for Escambia County that was issued on September 16. The county's surveillance reveals low levels of West Nile virus (WNV) and the recent cold weather will assist in keeping mosquito activity low.

Mosquitoes, however, are present year-round. 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.
- **Screens:** Cover open windows and doors with screens. Check screens regularly for tears and openings that need to be repaired.

Homeowners can help prevent mosquito-borne disease by clearing potential breeding sites in and around their home:

- 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 all plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week. Don't forget indoor plants.
- 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 Escambia County Health Department Division of Environmental Health at 595-6700.

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