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Governor

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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pinellas County Health Department Provides Update on Mosquito-Borne Illness in the County

(PINELLAS COUNTY) – Today, officials from the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Pinellas County Health Department continue to urge area residents to take precautions to protect from mosquito bites. **Two additional cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) have been identified:** an 85-year-old woman and a 78-year-old man, both residents of Pinellas County. On July 29, a Medical Alert for West Nile Virus was issued for Pinellas County.

Area physicians should contact their county's health department if they suspect an individual may have contracted a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

It takes from 2 to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito for an individual to develop symptoms of WNV. Symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash (on the trunk of the body) and swollen lymph glands.

To reduce the risk of being bitten mosquitoes, DOH recommends that individuals remain diligent in their personal prevention efforts. These 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-methyltoluamide, or N, N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) are recommended. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options.
- ◆ **Drainage** – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Tips on Repellent Use:

- ◆ Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before you apply a repellent. Some repellents are not suitable for children.
- ◆ Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET are generally recommended. Other effective mosquito repellents, as reported by the CDC in April 2005, contain Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These products are generally available at local pharmacies. Look for active ingredients listed on the product label.

(MORE)



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- ◆ Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but *not under clothing*.
- ◆ In protecting children, read label instructions to *be sure the repellent is age-appropriate*. According to the CDC, mosquito repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under the age of three years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than two months old.
- ◆ Infants should be kept indoors, or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- ◆ *Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children*. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
- ◆ If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites:

Getting rid of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention. Mosquitoes breed in standing water, so check your yard at least once a week.

- ◆ Clean out eaves and gutters.
- ◆ Remove old tires or drill drainage holes in those used in playgrounds.
- ◆ Turn over or remove empty pots.
- ◆ Pick up beverage containers and cups.
- ◆ Check tarps on boats or equipment that may collect water.
- ◆ Store canoes and small boats upside-down.
- ◆ Replace water in birdbaths and pet feeding dishes.
- ◆ Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants.
- ◆ Also, make sure window and door *screens* are in good condition. Have an older neighbor or family member? See if they need help installing or repairing screens.

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including WNV and Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria and dengue. Residents 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 Website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/arboviral/index.htm>, or the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>. You may also call the WNV Hotline at 1-888-880-5782 or contact your local county health department.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.

www.PinellasHealth.com