



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte-Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Officer
Pinellas County Health Department
727-824-6908 (media only)

Enjoy the outdoors but don't forget about mosquitoes...

Just one mosquito bite can transmit diseases such as West Nile Virus or others. And while **there have been NO reported cases of West Nile Virus so far in Pinellas County this year**, our recent heavy rains can increase the possibility of mosquito bites.

When dealing with mosquito-borne diseases, prevention is your best bet. Fighting mosquito bites reduces your risk of getting this disease, along with others that mosquitoes can carry. Here, from the **Pinellas County Health Department**, are some ways to reduce your risk of mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases.

Avoid bites and illness. Use insect repellent when you go outdoors. Use an EPA-registered repellent such as those with DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Even a short time being outdoors can be long enough to get a mosquito bite.

Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites. If you can, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. For extra protection, spray clothes with repellent containing permethrin or another EPA-registered repellent. If the repellent contains permethrin, don't apply it directly to your skin. Do not spray repellent on the skin under your clothing

Mosquito-proof your home. Drain standing water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water .

- Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water.
- Install or repair screens. Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors. Offer to help neighbors whose screens might be in bad shape.

Clean up. Mosquito breeding sites can be anywhere. Neighborhood clean-up days can be organized by civic or youth organizations to pick up containers from vacant lots and parks and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water. Mosquitoes don't care about fences, so it's important to control breeding sites throughout the neighborhood.

Remember the **Five D's**:

- **Dusk and Dawn:** Many mosquitoes are active between dusk and dawn. Limit your time outdoors during these hours.
- **Dress:** Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks sprayed with repellent while outdoors.
- **DEET:** Use an insect repellent that contains DEET. Put it on exposed skin when you go outdoors.
- **Drain standing water.** Don't give mosquitoes a place to breed.

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