

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott  
Governor

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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation



## Sarasota County Mosquito-Borne Disease Update 7-28-14

With the summer rainy season upon us, the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) and Sarasota County Mosquito Management urges business and homeowners to get rid of standing water around their properties. The water attracts mosquitoes looking to lay eggs. Health officials say that trashcans, recycling bins, tires, toys, plastic pools, tarps, boats and plant pots are among the places water could gather.

Mosquitoes can transmit potentially serious diseases. Mosquitoes are capable of spreading disease when they feed on infected birds and then bite humans or other animals.

Sarasota County Mosquito Management maintains 13 sentinel chicken flocks with 6 chickens in each flock as a way of determining the presence of mosquito-borne diseases around the county. A small blood sample is taken every week to test for a range of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus (WNV), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) or other mosquito-borne diseases.

Mosquito-borne viruses do not hurt the chickens, but their immune systems generate antibodies to fight it. If those antibodies show up in the tests, health officials can warn residents to avoid mosquitoes, and mosquito control units can better focus and intensify their efforts.

The presence of disease in chickens does not mean that it will be transmitted to humans, but is an indicator that disease is present and risk for human transmission is heightened.

Currently, the sentinel chicken flocks, which serve as an indicator of mosquito-borne illnesses, do not show evidence of West Nile Virus (WNV) transmission or other mosquito-borne diseases in Sarasota County. However, the risk of mosquito-borne diseases increases in the summer and continues into the fall.

The more time you are outdoors, the more time you could be bitten by an infected mosquito. Health officials urge residents and seasonal visitors to pay attention to avoiding mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or playing.

People who travel where mosquitoes are present may be at increased risk for WNV, dengue fever, malaria, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Yellow Fever and chikungunya infection. Travelers returning from the Caribbean to Florida have become ill with chikungunya fever. However, in July 2014, the [first cases of chikungunya were reported in individuals in south Florida](#) with **no history of recent travel**. Because this disease is becoming part of the Florida landscape, it is important to follow the 'Drain and Cover' guidance provided on the next page.

There is no vaccine to prevent these mosquito-borne diseases in humans. According to Mosquito Management officials, the species that transmit WNV, Dengue Fever, and EEE are found readily in Sarasota County. However, health officials say that currently there are no locally acquired human cases of WNV, dengue or EEE in Sarasota County.

The most common mosquitoes that transmit these diseases are associated with the accumulation of water in man-made containers that serve as breeding sites. Eliminating water sources (buckets, etc.) will greatly reduce encounters with these mosquitoes. Additionally, make sure that your window screens are in good order to reduce the risk of mosquitoes feeding inside your home.

DOH-Sarasota and Sarasota County Mosquito Management encourage everyone to adopt these three basic precautions to help limit mosquito bites and exposure to mosquito-borne illness:

- **DRAIN any standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.**

Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, including containers that hold water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. Flush bromeliad plants with fresh water or use a larvicide-- (e.g. BTI granules) in the "tank" of the bromeliads to limit mosquito development.



- **COVER skin with clothing or repellent.** Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents **according to the label**. Repellents with picaridin, DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months. More information on repellents can be found at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/ga/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/ga/insect_repellent.htm)

- **COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your residence.**

Since mosquitoes can bite anytime you are outdoors, always be cautious. They tend to be most active during dawn and dusk.

When possible, stay in facilities with screened windows and doors and air conditioning to reduce risk of mosquito bites.

When outdoors and mosquitoes are present, wear clothing such as shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt to cover most of your skin. Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.

Also, it is important to vaccinate your horses for WNV and EEE and make sure your pets are taking medication to prevent mosquito-transmitted diseases like dog heart worm.

**Resources for more information:**

**Sarasota County Mosquito Management:** Contact the Sarasota County Contact Center at 941-861-5000 or visit [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org) for ways to reduce mosquito-breeding sites around your home or to report a mosquito problem.

**DOH Sarasota:** Healthcare providers and others with health-related questions: 941-861-2837.

**Florida Department of Health:** Mosquito-borne disease information: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/arboviral/index.html>.