



Jeb Bush  
Governor

John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A.  
Secretary

---

**PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

---

For immediate release:  
March 4, 2004

For more information, please contact:  
Elaine Fulton-Jones at 727-824-6908

## **Press Advisory**

### **Citizens Can Help Break the Mosquito Cycle**

ST. PETERSBURG -- With the recent rains, mosquitoes are again on the wing in Pinellas County. Pinellas County Mosquito Control technicians are aggressively treating known breeding areas, by ground and by air, as well as responding to calls from citizens. Technicians have noted that many of the homes they've inspected also have items or areas that contain standing water – the ideal breeding condition for mosquitoes – and are contributing to the mosquito problem.

Pinellas County Mosquito Control and Pinellas County Health Department officials ask all citizens to do their part to reduce the mosquito population. Remember that mosquitoes only need  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of standing water for the larvae to survive. Some simple suggestions are to:

- ◆ Empty the water from old tires, flowerpots, garbage cans and lids, recycling containers, wheelbarrows, aluminum cans, boat tarps, and buckets.
- ◆ Flush birdbaths and wading pools weekly.
- ◆ Flush bromeliads or treat with B.t.i., a biological larvicide available at home stores.
- ◆ Change the water in outdoor pet dishes regularly.
- ◆ Keep pools chlorinated.
- ◆ Stock ornamental ponds with mosquito-eating fish.
- ◆ Cover rain barrels with screening.
- ◆ Check for standing water under houses, near plumbing drains, under air conditioner drip areas, around septic tanks, and in rain gutters.
- ◆ Take steps to eliminate the standing water, improve drainage, and prevent future puddling.

This year the Pinellas County Health Department has confirmed the presence of West Nile virus in three of Pinellas County Mosquito Control's sentinel chickens and EEE virus in one chicken. Sentinel chickens serve as a detection system for mosquito-borne arborviral diseases. This virus can cause illness and sometimes fatal encephalitis (also called inflammation of the brain) in people, horses, many types of birds, and possibly other animals and is spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes.

The threat of virus, although minimal, is present throughout the year, and precautions should be taken during outdoor activities. Protect skin from mosquito bites by either using mosquito repellent or by wearing long-sleeved clothing and pants.

By taking these simple preventative measures, citizens can help reduce the number of mosquitoes in our county and minimize mosquito-borne diseases.

– 30 –