



Jeb Bush
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Secretary

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS ADVISORY ISSUED FOR PINELLAS COUNTY
- *Surveillance system detects increase in WNV activity* -

Pinellas County – An increase in West Nile Virus (WNV) activity has been detected by surveillance systems monitored by Pinellas County Mosquito Control and the Pinellas County Health Department. Although no human cases of WNV have been reported in Pinellas County, 10 chickens maintained as a part of the county's early warning system for viral activity have tested positive for exposure to this virus since August. Of that number, 4 (four) were reported in the last week, indicating a recent increase in West Nile Virus activity in the county.

As the weather gets cooler and outdoor activity may increase, Pinellas County Health Department officials remind individuals to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts both at home and when traveling.

State and local public health officials urge all residents to follow the **5 D's** for prevention:

- **Dusk and Dawn** -- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood. For many species of mosquito, this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- **Dress** -- Wear clothing that covers 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. Products with concentrations up to 30% DEET are generally recommended for most situations. (It is not recommended to use DEET on children less than two months old. Instead, infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting used over carriers when mosquitoes are present). If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Always read the manufacturer's directions carefully before you put on a mosquito repellent.
- **Drainage** -- Check your home to rid it of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Also, make sure that any open windows at home and work are covered by screens.

(MORE)



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Elimination of breeding sites is another key to prevention.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

- Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill drainage holes in those used in playgrounds.
- 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. Drain unused swimming pools.
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.
- Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus infection may include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. People who believe they may have West Nile Virus should contact their health care provider. Florida Department of Health (DOH) laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease. Physicians in Pinellas County should report suspected cases of West Nile Virus to the Pinellas County Health Department's Epidemiology Program at (727) 824-6932 or (727) 824-6900.

Florida residents are encouraged to report dead bird sightings at: www.wildflorida.com/bird or by calling their local county health department. To report dead birds locally, call the Pinellas County Health Department, Office of Environmental Health at (727) 507-4336.

For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's website at: www.doh.state.fl.us and select environmental health from the pull-down menu.

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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.