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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Spooks, Goblins and Skeeters: *Protect Your Trick-or-Treaters From Mosquitoes On Halloween*

Be afraid—very afraid—of spooks and goblins this Halloween, but don't let mosquitoes trick you into becoming their treat. The Pinellas County Health Department reminds parents to protect their trick-or-treaters from mosquito bites as they make the rounds outdoors at dusk on Oct. 31.

Sentinel chickens in Pinellas coops have tested positive for mosquito-borne illnesses recently, although no human cases have been reported. Since mosquitoes love to feed at dawn and dusk, protecting yourself and your children as the sun sets on Halloween's candy-hunting travels is still a good idea.

Avoid becoming a hungry mosquito's next meal by remembering the "Five D's" of prevention:

- **Dress** appropriately. The use of barrier clothing to prevent bites includes long sleeve shirts, pants and socks. (That Darth Vader costume may prove to be pretty good protection after all.)
- Avoid outdoor activities during **dusk** and **dawn** hours when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you must be outdoors, use mosquito repellent with **DEET**. This is a chemical that is used in a variety of commercial products and repels mosquitoes. Use in accordance with package directions (more is not necessarily better) and re-apply as needed on skin that will be exposed.
- **Drain** gutters, flowerpots, birdbaths and any container that can hold as little as a quarter-inch of water around your home. An adult mosquito, under ideal conditions, can emerge from an egg within six days.

And don't forget to balance all that Halloween candy loot with physical activity this year! Add more walking and active fun to your celebrations. For healthy fun and food ideas, to go www.FindtheFunNow.com, the Pinellas County Health Department's source for "funner" fitness and good food.

Go to www.PinellasHealth.com for more information about the Pinellas County Health Department's services to the community.

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