



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDICAL ALERT ISSUED FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY

--Human Case of West Nile Virus Confirmed--

Today, St. Johns County Health Department Acting Medical Director William Eyerly, M.D. announced that Florida Department of Health (DOH) Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., has issued a medical alert for St. Johns County after a human case of West Nile (WN) virus was confirmed in a 51-year-old male resident.

"Unfortunately it appears that this individual has succumbed due to a previously existing condition and complications from the WN virus," said Eyerly. He added, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the friends and family of this individual."

Symptoms of West Nile virus include a fever of 100 degrees F. or more, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, rash, swollen lymph glands, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. Physicians should contact the county health department if they suspect an individual may have a mosquito-borne illness. DOH laboratories provide testing services for physicians treating patients with clinical signs of mosquito-borne disease.

Eyerly reinforced the message that Dr. Agwunobi, state health officer, has communicated to the public for more than a year, that all people in Florida should assume that mosquito-borne viruses are present in their community. "Therefore," stated Eyerly, "the important message is that people should adhere to the recommended prevention methods."

DOH continues to advise the public to employ the "5 D's" for prevention in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These include:

- **Dusk and Dawn** -- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood, for many species 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 2 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 repellent.
- **Drainage** -- Check your home to rid it of standing water in which mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.

Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.

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.

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.

DOH continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito borne illnesses, including West Nile (WN) virus, Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE), St. Louis Encephalitis (SLE), malaria, and dengue.

Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the Web site <http://www.wildflorida.org/bird> or by calling their local county health department. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's Environmental Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/hsee/arbo/index.htm>, call the West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-888-880-5782, or your local county health department.