

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



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

MEMORANDUM

DATE 06/22/2017
TO Okeechobee News
FROM: Brian Sell
SUBJECT: Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Preparedness Planner

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Dump and drain after the rain to prevent mosquitoes

Mosquito season is underway – do your part to keep them at bay.

Recent rains, combined with warm, humid weather, act as a perfect environment for mosquito breeding. And while Okeechobee County has seen no local transmissions of Zika virus, mosquitoes can still transfer dangerous diseases, including St. Louis encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis and West Nile virus. Concerns over mosquito-borne illnesses, or arboviruses, continue to serve as an important reminder to area residents to do their part to reduce the spread of mosquitoes.

How Zika Spreads Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites all day and night, whether you are inside or outside. A mosquito becomes infected when it bites a person already infected with Zika. That mosquito can then spread the virus by biting more people.

Zika virus can also spread:

- During sex with a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners.
- From a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth.
- Through blood transfusion (likely but not confirmed).

Why Zika is Risky for Some People Zika infection during pregnancy can cause fetuses to have a birth defect of the brain called microcephaly. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth. There have also been increased reports of Guillain-Barré syndrome, an uncommon sickness of the nervous system, in areas affected by Zika.

Zika Symptoms Many people infected with Zika won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. Symptoms can last for several days to a week. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. Once a person has been infected with Zika, they are likely to be protected from future infections.

Residents are encouraged to help abate the mosquito population by draining flower pots, watering cans, food bowls and any container that holds water. Moist leaves and organic matter also provide a perfect environment for mosquito larvae. By cleaning gutters and raking leaves, homeowners can stop the growth cycle.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, remember the four Ds:

DUSK to DAWN – the timeframe when mosquitoes are most active. Reduce or eliminate outdoor activity between dusk and dawn or take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

DRAIN – standing water. Water found in old tires, flower pots, clogged rain gutters, leaky pipes and faucets, birdbaths and wading pools can be breeding sites for mosquitoes.

DRESS – in light-colored, long sleeves and pants when you are outside, especially in mosquito-infested areas.

DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) – if you are planning to be outside when mosquitoes are most active. Be sure to apply insect repellent that contains DEET. Read and follow label instructions. Spray both exposed skin and clothing with repellent.

For information on Zika virus, visit the Florida Department of Health, www.floridahealth.gov.