

Mission:

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



Rick Scott
Governor

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Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STAY HEALTHY THIS SUMMER BY PROTECTING YOU AND YOUR
LOVED ONES FROM MOSQUITOES**

~ Drain and Cover to Keep Your Family Safe and Healthy ~

OKALOOSA COUNTY — The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) cautions to protect yourself and your family against mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can carry harmful viruses that can cause serious illness in people. The best way to reduce the risk of getting ill is to avoid getting mosquito bites by remembering to “**Drain and Cover**”:

DRAIN standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that are not being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER skin with clothing or repellent.

- Clothing - Wear shoes, socks and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- Repellent - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
- Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET(N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide), picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than two months old.

COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before you apply a repellent. Some repellents are not suitable for children.
- Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET are generally recommended. Other US Environmental Protection Agency-approved repellents contain picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. These products are generally available at local pharmacies. Look for active ingredients to be listed on the product label.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but not under clothing.
- In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is age-appropriate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mosquito repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under the age of three years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than two months old.

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- Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions

For more information on what repellent is right for you, consider using the Environmental Protection Agency's search tool to help you choose skin-applied repellent products at <http://www2.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>.

The Department continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including West Nile virus infections, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis, Malaria and Dengue. Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at their site, <http://www.myfwc.com/bird/>.

The spray schedule for Okaloosa Mosquito Control can be found at <http://co.okaloosa.fl.us/pw/environmental/mosquito-control>.

For more information, visit the Department's website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html> or call your local county health department. For more information about EEEV, West Nile Virus and horse vaccines, please visit the FDACS website, <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Animal-Industry>.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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