



News Release

Department of Health and Wellness

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FULTON COUNTY CAUTIONS RESIDENTS AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS

West Nile Virus season runs May through October and the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness cautions residents to use preventive measures to deter mosquito growth in their neighborhoods. Residents are urged to clean areas of standing water and to take precautions when outside.

“We are at the beginning of the season for increased mosquito activity,” says Dr. Kim Turner, Interim Health Director of the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness. “In 2008, only one human case of WNV was identified in Fulton however 22 mosquito pools were identified throughout the county. It is important for everyone to use preventive measures to protect themselves against the virus.”

Symptoms of WNV include headache, fever, neck discomfort, muscle and joint aches, swollen lymph nodes and a rash. WNV can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and lining of the brain). People with compromised immune systems or other underlying conditions are at greater risk for complications from the disease.

Dr. Turner adds, “Transmission of this potentially serious illness from mosquito to human is high. West Nile Virus is a serious illness but is preventable if we take action to reduce our exposure to mosquito bites.” To reduce exposure to mosquitoes and to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus, the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness recommends the following:

In January 2009, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners approved an additional \$150,000 in contingency to support mosquito control activities of the Fulton County Department of Health & Wellness, to prevent West Nile Virus.

Mosquitoes need water to breed. They can breed in any puddle or standing water that remains more than four days. By removing areas of standing water, breeding grounds can be eliminated to reduce the number of mosquitoes:

- Dispose of old tires. Regularly empty any metal cans, ceramic flowerpots, bottles, jars, buckets, and other water-holding containers on your property.

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- Turn over plastic wading pools, outdoor toys and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets.
- Keep gutters cleared and sloped to the downspout.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated. Remove standing water from pool covers.
- Make sure windows and screens are in good condition.
- Purchase and use Mosquito Dunks (a larvicide used to kill mosquito larvae) to control mosquitoes in areas with standing water and in containers that cannot be dumped.

Mosquitoes that carry the West Nile Virus bite during the evening, night and early morning. Take precautions to protect yourself and your family during these periods.

- Use insect repellent containing the active ingredient N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET). Spray the top of your clothing and exposed skin. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk.

For more information on West Nile Virus and prevention methods, call the ***Mosquito Hotline: 404-730-5296*** or contact the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness; Division of Environmental Health at (404) 730-1301. Also, more information is located on-line at <http://www.fultoncountygahahealth.org>.

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