



For Immediate Release: 09/18/2017

For further information, contact Shelly Redovan, Deputy Director, Education & Communication at (239) 694-2174 or redovan@lcmcd.org

Hurricane Irma's Impact on Mosquito Populations

Ft. Myers, FL - Lee County Mosquito Control District (LCMCD) is predicting a large mosquito outbreak as a result of Hurricane Irma's heavy rains and flooding. Coastal and inland areas have expansive areas of standing water, which will produce large numbers of mosquitoes. Treatments to control adult mosquitoes will begin Sept. 18th between the hours of 9 PM and 2 AM. Residents of Lee County may encounter adult mosquitoes for several days before experiencing relief from LCMCD control efforts. Areas with the highest numbers of adult mosquitoes and that are without power will be treated first. Many areas still have debris and flooding preventing ground control of adult mosquitoes. LCMCD suggests individuals consider using repellent to protect themselves from mosquitoes.

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Animal Industries, preventing animals from exposure to adult mosquitoes is important. Horses should be stabled inside during peak mosquito feeding times, which are dawn and dusk. Use of mosquito-resistant devices such as well-maintained insect screening and fans may reduce potential access of mosquitoes to equine and other livestock hosts. Horse owners should use repellents approved for use on horses, but the effectiveness of some formulations under certain conditions (e.g., rain, perspiration) may be limited. Always follow label instructions. Residents are encouraged to contact their veterinarian for advice on mosquito protection measures for pets and livestock, especially for heartworm disease. To report mosquito concerns please call 239-694-2174.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, the Department of Health recommends that individuals remain diligent in their personal prevention efforts. These should include the following for prevention:

- ◆ Apply repellent. Using mosquito repellent is one of the most important ways to protect yourself from mosquitoes.
- ◆ Wear light colored clothing that covers most of your skin.
- ◆ Ensure or restore all window and door screens are secure and functional.
- ◆ Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. Areas to check: clear rain gutters so that water can drain, keep pools chlorinated, flush or treat bromeliad plants, change water in birdbaths once a week, remove obstructions to water flow in drainage ditches, and remove, cover, invert or dump containers that hold water.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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 effective mosquito repellents contain Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Look for active ingredients 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 CDC, 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.
- ◆ Infants should be kept indoors, or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- ◆ *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.