



February 2, 2016  
#160202-MosquitoPrecautions

Contact: Brandi Whitehurst, Public Information Officer  
(850) 983-5254 - office, (850) 572-0580 - cell  
[brandiw@santarosa.fl.gov](mailto:brandiw@santarosa.fl.gov)

## ***Santa Rosa County Urges Residents to Protect Against Mosquitoes***

Worldwide concerns of Zika virus serve as an important reminder to local residents to practice precautions and help reduce the spread of mosquitoes. Although no one has contracted the Zika virus in Florida, mosquito bites can still transfer dangerous mosquito-borne diseases, or arboviruses, including St. Louis encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis and West Nile virus.

Santa Rosa mosquito technicians are currently monitoring the county's mosquito traps and treating standing water, such as holding ponds, with larvicide. A native plains fish, *gambusia affinis*, is used to control mosquito larvae in wetlands. While larvae abatement is a year-round practice, spraying for adult mosquitoes generally begins in March or April – when temperatures begin to consistently stay above 60 degrees.

Residents are encouraged to help reduce 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. Residents may report areas of standing water, such as neglected or abandoned swimming pools, by calling 850-981-7135.

To help 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 more information on Santa Rosa County mosquito control, visit [www.santarosa.fl.gov/mosquito](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/mosquito). For information on Zika virus, visit the Florida Department of Health, [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

# # #