



NEWS RELEASE Mobile County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mobile County Health Department reports case of Dengue Fever

Dr. Bernard Eichold, Health Officer, has been notified that a recent case of Dengue Fever has been reported in Mobile County. The case was imported in a 48-year-old male with travel history during the incubation period while in the Caribbean. He was hospitalized and released after supportive treatment. The same person also tested positive for West Nile virus, which was also thought to have been contracted outside the country.

Before this case, the most recent reported cases of Dengue Fever in Mobile County were two reported in 2008. Each case involved a person who had traveled internationally, one to Mexico and the other to Samoa in the South Pacific.

Dengue Fever is a viral illness transmitted by mosquitoes. Its signs and symptoms include fever, chills, headache, rash, and pain upon moving the eyes. Painful aching in the legs and joints occurs during the first hours of illness. The temperature rises quickly as high as 104° F, with relative low heart rate and low blood pressure. The eyes become reddened. A flushing or pale pink rash comes over the face and then disappears. The glands (lymph nodes) in the neck and groin are often swollen.

Fever and other signs of dengue last for two to four days, followed by a rapid drop in body temperature with profuse sweating. This precedes a period with normal temperature and a sense of well-being that lasts about a day. A second rapid rise in temperature follows. A characteristic rash appears along with the fever and spreads from the extremities to cover the entire body except the face. The palms and soles may be bright red and swollen. There are no antibiotics for treatment or vaccines for prevention.

Dr. Eichold says that the Health Department's mosquito control activities are ongoing, and people should take precautions to avoid exposure to mosquitoes. Listed below are steps to take to avoid mosquito bites.

Clothing and aromatics

- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothes to help prevent mosquitoes from reaching the skin and to retain less heat, thereby making you less "attractive" to mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are more attracted to dark colors.
- When possible, wear long sleeves and long pants.
- Avoid perfumes, colognes, fragrant hair sprays, lotions and soaps. They attract mosquitoes.

Repellents

- Follow the label instructions when applying repellents. Permethrin repellents are for use only for clothes, not skin.

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- When using repellents, avoid contact with eyes, lips, and nasal membranes.
- Use a good mosquito repellent on exposed areas. Some of the most reliable repellents contain the chemical DEET. All repellents should be used in accordance with label instructions.
- Apply DEET repellent on arms, legs, and other exposed areas but never under clothing. After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- Citronella candles and repellents containing citronella can help, but their range is limited. Herbals such as cedar, geranium, pennyroyal, lavender, cinnamon, and garlic are not very effective.

Around the home

- Keep windows and door screens in good condition.
- Replace porch lights with yellow light bulbs. They attract fewer insects.
- Mosquitoes breed in standing water so empty all water from old tires, cans and jars, buckets, drums, plastic wading pools, toys, and other containers.
- Clean clogged gutters.
- Remove the rim from potted plants and replace water in plant/flower vases weekly.
- Replenish pet-watering dishes daily and rinse birdbaths weekly.
- Fill tree holes and depressions left by fallen trees with dirt or sand.
- Stock ornamental ponds with mosquito fish or use larvicide “doughnuts.”
- Do not place grass clippings in or blow leaves into drainage ditches or storm drains. This will block the flow of water and allow mosquito breeding near the home.

