

**Mission:**

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



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Craig Ackerman  
352-629-0137, ext. 2052  
Craig.Ackerman@FLHealth.gov

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH URGES FLORIDIANS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS***West Nile Virus Case Confirmed in Walton County*

Ocala—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County is urging Floridians and visitors to protect themselves against West Nile virus. The Department of Health has confirmed the first case of West Nile virus illness in Florida for 2015 in an adult female resident of Walton County. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that causes mild to severe illness, and there have been 38 other states with confirmed cases in 2015.

No cases of West Nile virus have been detected in Marion County, but the community is not immune to mosquito-borne illnesses. Two Marion County horses have tested positive for Eastern equine encephalitis in 2015—one in June and one in July. No human cases have been reported.

"I encourage Floridians and visitors to take steps to prevent mosquito bites that can lead to illness," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Stay safe by draining any standing water near or in your home, making sure that screens are intact, and keeping your skin covered with clothing and mosquito repellent."

Most people with West Nile virus infections, approximately 80 percent, have no symptoms. In those people who develop them, most experience a mild illness with conditions like headache, fever, pain and fatigue. These typically appear between two and 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

People over the age of 50 and individuals with weakened immune systems, especially transplant recipients and HIV-infected individuals, seem to be at increased risk for severe disease. There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus, and most mild infections are typically overcome with little or no medical intervention within a matter of weeks. Those experiencing severe side effects should seek medical attention immediately.

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 fever. Residents are encouraged to report dead birds to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website at [www.myfwc.com/bird](http://www.myfwc.com/bird).

The department has put together broadcast-quality downloadable videos in both English and Spanish for use by the media on West Nile virus. You can find those at [www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/). There are also a number of educational materials, including a frequently asked questions document and historical data on the illness. You'll also find basic information about the

**Florida Department of Health**

Marion County  
1801 SE 32nd Avenue, Ocala, Florida 34471-5532  
PHONE: 352/629-0137 • FAX 352/694-1613

**Marion.FloridaHealth.gov**

TWITTER: HealthyFLA  
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importance of taking precautions to avoid mosquito-borne illnesses in a press release put out by the department earlier this summer at [www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2015/06/061215-mosquito.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2015/06/061215-mosquito.html).

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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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