

December 18, 2024



PASCO COUNTY STILL UNDER MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESS ALERT. OFFICIALS URGE RESIDENTS TO STAY VIGILANT AGAINST MOSQUITO- BORNE DISEASES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pasco County still under mosquito-borne illness alert. Officials urge residents to stay vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases.

Pasco County, FL – December 18, 2024 – As winter brings cooler weather to Pasco County, the Pasco County Mosquito Control District (PCMCD) is urging residents not to let their guard down when it comes to mosquito-borne diseases. Despite recent cold temperatures, the threat of diseases such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), dengue fever, and West Nile virus remains very real.

This year has seen some of the most intense mosquito activity in the region due to drought conditions in early 2024 and impacts from a tropical storm and 2 major hurricanes, with alarming levels of disease transmission. Mosquito-borne diseases continue to affect both human and animal populations, with reports confirming several cases of concern throughout the year:

- **EEE** was detected in **emus** and **sentinel chickens** in the county, signaling the presence of the virus in the mosquito population.
- A **local outbreak of dengue virus** was reported in the **Moon Lake area**, affecting several residents and raising concerns about further spread.
- **West Nile virus** was detected in 2 humans, an alpaca, and mosquitoes across inland areas of Pasco County, after the unprecedented riverine flooding from Hurricane Milton, adding to the urgent need for continued vigilance, especially considering that floodwaters still remain in certain inland areas of the county.

"In spite of the colder temperatures, mosquitoes are still active, and the risk of mosquito-borne diseases remains high," said Adriane Rogers, Executive Director of the Pasco County Mosquito Control District. "Our team at PCMCD has been working tirelessly to reduce the potential for disease spread by employing an array of strategies as part of our integrated mosquito management approach. This includes heightened surveillance, targeted ground and aerial spraying, and increased public education efforts. However, we need residents to remain vigilant as well. Taking steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and emptying water-holding containers around their properties are essential."

The PCMCD is doing everything in its power to safeguard public health. The district has been monitoring mosquito populations, applying larvicides to prevent immature mosquitoes from hatching off, and conducting aerial and ground spraying in targeted areas where mosquito activity

has been most intense. In addition to these efforts, the PCMCD continues to collaborate with local health authorities to track disease trends and adjust strategies as needed.

Residents are encouraged to take preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites, including:

- **Using insect repellent** that contains DEET or Picaridin.
- **Wearing long sleeves and pants** when spending time outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk when most mosquito species are most active. However, dengue mosquito vectors are also active during the day.
- **Eliminating standing water** around homes, as it serves as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- **Installing or repairing window and door screens** to keep mosquitoes out of homes.

"While the recent cold weather may make some think mosquitoes are no longer a threat, that is simply not the case," said Adriane Rogers. "We ask all Pasco County residents to continue protecting themselves and their families. Our team is doing everything we can, but we need everyone to remain proactive in preventing mosquito bites as well."

For more information on mosquito control efforts, disease prevention, or to report mosquito-related concerns, residents are encouraged to visit the Pasco County Mosquito Control District's website at <https://www.pascomosquito.org/>, or call 727-376-4568.

About Pasco County Mosquito Control District

The Pasco County Mosquito Control District is dedicated to safeguarding the public's health through effective mosquito control and prevention programs. Our mission is to protect the health and well-being of the citizens of Pasco County through the prevention and control of mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases. Our goal is to control both pestiferous and disease carrying mosquito populations to a tolerable level in the safest, most economical manner, while using a variety of methods in such a way as to minimize potential effects on people, wildlife, and the environment.

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