



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Public Health

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Health Department Cautions Travelers To Caribbean About Disease-Carrying Mosquitoes

FAYETTEVILLE – The Cumberland County Department of Public Health cautions travelers to the Caribbean to take preventative measures against the spread of the Chikungunya virus (CHIKV), which is carried by 80 percent of the mosquitoes in the Caribbean. The Centers for Disease Control reports four confirmed cases of the disease in North Carolina.

Travelers who visit the Caribbean are asked to use mosquito repellent for 10 days after returning to the states to prevent local mosquitoes from picking up CHIKV. The Health Department also reminds Cumberland County residents they can pick up free mosquito insecticide at the department while supplies last.

CHIKV is spread by Aedes mosquitoes, also known as Asian Tiger mosquitoes. The virus causes fever and joint pain, especially in the hands and feet. The virus does not often result in death, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling and may persist for months. CHIKV symptoms usually appear in patients three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people feel better after a few days or weeks, but some individuals may develop longer-term joint pain.

Travelers returning from countries known to have CHIKV should see their doctor if they start to feel ill within two weeks after arriving home. The elderly, infants and people with chronic health conditions like hypertension and diabetes are most at risk. There is no specific medication to treat the virus, but medicine that lowers fever and joint pain may help.

The most effective way to guard against CHIKV is mosquito-bite prevention. The disease can be spread to local mosquitoes that bite travelers who were bitten by mosquitoes in the Caribbean.

Free Mosquito Insecticide Available

County residents can pick up a four-month supply of Mosquito Dunks at the Health Department, 1235 Ramsey St., Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. There are extended hours on Tuesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. The round-shaped product is placed in water, where it floats. Each dunk will be effective for 30 days in standing water and will cover 100 square feet of surface. It can be used in lakes, fish ponds, bird baths, flower pots and aquatic gardens, flood-control basins, unused swimming pools and other areas where standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

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In addition to insecticide, citizens can reduce the mosquito population by using the “tip and toss” method – tipping or tossing any containers containing standing water, such as old tires, flower pots, bottles and cans. Other tips to reduce the mosquito population and prevent bites include:

- Clean leaf-clogged gutters.
- Repair leaky faucets.
- Screen or cover rain barrels.
- Clean overgrown ponds and stock with fish.
- Fill tree holes.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and pants.
- Use mosquito repellent including DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin. Ensure windows/door screens are intact.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing to repel and kill mosquitoes.

For more information, call 910-433-3680.

For additional information about the Cumberland County Department of Public Health, please call 910-433-3600 or visit with someone at the information desk. Comments are welcome and can be submitted on our website at http://www.co.cumberland.nc.us/health/comment_form.aspx. The Health Department is located at 1235 Ramsey St. in Fayetteville.

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