



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Public Health

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Cumberland Partners In Mosquito Surveillance Program

FAYETTEVILLE – The Cumberland County Department of Public Health is a partner in a voluntary program to survey potentially disease-carrying mosquitoes as part of a statewide public health response to the Zika virus. The survey will update the distribution range of two mosquitoes known to carry the Zika virus.

The Health Department's Environmental Health Division is working with Fort Bragg and N.C. State University to conduct the mosquito survey using ovitraps to collect mosquito eggs and larva of the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes Albopictus* mosquitoes. Samples will be collected through October and a final statewide survey report will be sent for review by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services in December. Cumberland County is one of 15 counties and three military installations that have volunteered to participate in the survey.

In addition to participation in the survey program, Environmental Health has stocked most ponds in Cumberland County with the *Gambusia* fish, a small fish that eats mosquito larvae.

Eleven cases of Zika have been reported in North Carolina, but none of those cases originated here. According to the Centers for Disease Control, all cases of Zika virus in the U.S. were contracted during travels to other countries and were not caused by mosquitoes here. Zika is currently active in countries in Central and South America and Asia.

One in five people infected with Zika will become ill. Symptoms include a mild rash, fever and headaches. Birth defects related to the Zika virus have been reported in Brazil. The Health Department recommends pregnant women should not travel to areas where Zika is present.

Free Mosquito Insecticide

Environmental Health is also giving away four-month supplies of the mosquito insecticide product Mosquito Dunks to county residents while supplies last. County residents can pick up the insecticide at the Health Department, 1235 Ramsey St., Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. and until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. Go to the Environmental Health section on the third floor.

The Mosquito Dunks product is a biological pest control agent that kills mosquito larvae. It is non-toxic to fish, birds, wildlife and pets. The round-shaped product is placed in water, where it floats. It can be used in lakes, fish ponds, bird baths, flower pots, drainage ditches, aquatic gardens and decorative ponds, flood-control basins, unused swimming pools and other areas where standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The active ingredient is *bacillus thuringiensis*. Printed instructions will be available.

Mosquito Control Tips

Environmental Health also reminds citizens of other effective methods of mosquito control, including the “tip and toss” method. Tip over any containers that have standing water including tires, flower pots, buckets, jars and barrels. Replace water in bird baths weekly. Mosquitoes can breed in as little as an ounce of water.

In addition to insecticide, there are simple ways to prevent mosquito bites:

- Keep children’s wading pools empty or stored on their side when not in use.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors, which also repels ticks. Remember to always follow product directions.
- Wear long sleeves and pants at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active or stay indoors during these hours.
- Make sure your windows have good screens to keep mosquitoes out.

If you would like more information about the Cumberland County Department of Public Health’s programs and services, health-related data, or community resources, please call 910-433-3600 or visit with someone at the information desk, or visit our website at co.cumberland.nc.us/health.aspx#. Comments are welcome and can be submitted on our website at co.cumberland.nc.us/health/comment_form.aspx. The Health Department is located at 1235 Ramsey St. in Fayetteville.