



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs

2001 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2001
Tel 919-733-9190 • Fax 919-733-7447

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor

Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

For release: Immediate

Date: June 12, 2009

Contact: Carol Schriber, DHHS Public Affairs Office, 919-733-9190

JUNE IS VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH
***State Health Officials to Host Tick and Mosquito Awareness Event
at William B. Umstead State Park***

RALEIGH – Governor Bev Perdue has proclaimed June as Vector-borne Disease Awareness Month, to highlight the importance of preventative measures against ticks and mosquitoes and the diseases they carry.

State health officials will host an awareness event Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at William B. Umstead State Park, Harrison Drive entrance, to show North Carolinians effective yet simple measures to protect against tick and mosquito bites.

State Health Director Jeff Engel will kick off the event at 10 a.m., and staff from the divisions of Environmental Health and Public Health will be on hand to answer questions, demonstrate prevention measures for people and for their homes and gardens, and to discuss the importance of repellent use.

“Pests like ticks and mosquitoes are more than nuisances; they carry many diseases that can make people seriously ill. So, it is important for people to know the right measures they can take to prevent tick and mosquito bites,” said State Health Director Jeff Engel. “North Carolina has led the country in cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever for the past two years, and that is only one of six dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases that can be contracted here through tick and mosquito bites.”

Dr. Engel added that insect repellent is useful to deflect mosquitoes and ticks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends several repellents against mosquitoes – DEET, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus. According to the CDC, oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years old. Repellents containing permethrin provide excellent protection against ticks but may only be used on clothing, not on the skin. Consumers should look for products that contain the CDC-recommended ingredients, and should read and follow all label instructions.

Exposure to both mosquitoes and ticks also can be limited by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks. People should also check themselves and their families for ticks when they are in tick-prone areas. And, they can reduce exposure to these pests at home by taking simple steps to make their homes and yards less friendly to mosquitoes and ticks.

According to the N.C. Division of Public Health, 515 cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever were reported in North Carolina in 2008, as well as 59 reported cases of Lyme disease and 41 reported cases of ehrlichiosis. All are spread by ticks.

(MORE)



Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, N.C. 27603

www.ncdhhs.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Mosquito-borne illness is also present in the state. La Crosse encephalitis is the most common mosquito-borne illness and occurs mostly in western North Carolina. Two other mosquito-borne diseases, Eastern equine encephalitis and West Nile fever, are also found in North Carolina. While Eastern equine encephalitis occurs mainly in the eastern part of the state, West Nile virus is found statewide.

For additional information on mosquitoes and ticks, visit these public health Web sites:
www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm, www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus and www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tick.

###