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AFTER THE STORM, REMEMBER TO DRAIN AND COVER



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Tallahassee, Fla.—As the Florida counties impacted by Tropical Storm Colin begin to clean up, the Florida Department of Health reminds everyone to do their part in preventing mosquito breeding. All Florida residents and visitors are asked to “Drain and Cover” to help keep our families and neighbors safe; it only takes a bottle cap of water for some mosquitoes to breed and multiply.

“We must all do our part to act quickly to eliminate new sources of standing water brought on by Tropical Storm Colin, which can rapidly become mosquito breeding sites,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. “While we have not experienced local transmission of Zika in Florida, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect ourselves from mosquito bites in and around our homes.”

To protect against mosquitoes, the department urges the public to “Drain and Cover”:

DRAIN standing water:

- Drain water from garbage cans, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rainwater has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER your skin with:

- **CLOTHING** - If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves.
- **REPELLENT** - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with 10-30 percent DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.

COVER doors and windows with screens:

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites:

- Clean out troughs and gutters;
- Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain;
- Turn over or remove empty plastic pots;
- Pick up all beverage containers and cups;
- Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water;
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week;
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week; and
- Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

The department has created a public service announcement on the “Drain and Cover” method, which you can view [here](#).

Click [here](#) for our downloadable poster on preventing mosquito bites.

For more information on mosquito-borne illness prevention, visit our [website](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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