Tampa, Fla. – Rainy season is here and the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County reminds everyone to do their part in preventing mosquito breeding and mosquito-borne illness. To protect against mosquitoes, the department urges the public to Drain and Cover to help keep families and neighbors safe. It only takes a bottle cap of water for some mosquitoes to breed and multiply.

**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](#).

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

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