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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

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## SPALDING COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES TIP ‘N TOSS CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE ZIKA VIRUS

The Spalding County Fire Department is urging residents to clean up around their homes, their yards, and their communities and dispose of any items that may hold or contain unnecessary water. It is recommended that all residents “**Tip ‘n Toss!**” after every rainfall to help reduce the mosquito population this summer and prevent the potential spread of the Zika virus. To date, no locally transmitted Zika cases have been reported in Georgia, but cases have been reported in returning travelers.

Zika virus is transmitted primarily through the bite of infected *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes – both species are found in Georgia. *Aedes* mosquitoes typically bite during the day, especially in the early morning and late afternoon hours but some bite at night. They are called “container breeders” because they have a tendency to lay eggs in any type of container with water – this can be something as small as a bottle cap if it has water in it.

One of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of Zika virus is by controlling the mosquito population by eliminating standing water around the home and in the yard.

**Tip ‘n Toss!** After every rainfall, **tip** out water in flowerpots, planters, children’s toys and wading pools, and buckets. If it holds water and you don’t need it (old tires, bottles, cans), **toss** it out. Look for small bodies of water such as drainage ponds, tree stumps and tire ruts. Clean out gutters, remove piles of leaves and keep vegetation cut low to prevent landing sites for adult mosquitoes

For instances where containers are too big or stationary to **Tip ‘N Toss**, use larvicides. Larvicides are insecticides that specifically target the larval life stage of an insect. They are available in many forms including mosquito torpedoes and mosquito dunks and pose no danger to humans, non-targeted animal species, or the environment when used according to directions.

## **Zika Virus Facts**

- Most people infected with Zika virus won't even know they have the disease because they won't have symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week.
- See your doctor or other healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes within 2 weeks after traveling to a place where Zika has been reported.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week.
- People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected.
- Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

**See your doctor or other healthcare providers if you develop the symptoms described above and have visited an area where Zika is found.**

To protect yourself against mosquito bites, use EPA-registered insect repellents containing 20%-30% DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Wearing light colored clothing with long pants and socks may be helpful as well.

Homeowners associations and neighborhoods are encouraged to spread the message of **Tip 'n Toss!** by sponsoring community cleanup days.

***For more information, contact  
Spalding County Fire Department at (770)228-2129.***

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