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Warm Weather, Recent Rains Bring Threat of Mosquitoes and Ticks;
Hyde Health Officials Urge Residents to Take Precautions

SWAN QUARTER – Health officials in Hyde County today emphasized tips for the county’s residents to follow to prevent tick- and mosquito-borne diseases because recent weather conditions have created an environment for mosquitoes and ticks to thrive.

“Recent rains and humid temperatures leave a friendly breeding environment for mosquitoes and ticks,” said Wesley P. Smith, director of the Hyde County Health Department. “Residents need to know that they can make their yards less friendly for disease-carrying insects, as well as know what they can do to prevent being bitten.”

The Hyde County Health Department offers the following tips for making homes and yards less mosquito- and tick-friendly:

- Keep grass short, and remove plants that attract animals like deer and rodents;
- Pour out any standing water, and remove any containers that can hold water;
- Keep gutters clean and in good repair;
- Repair leaky outdoor faucets and change the water in bird baths and pet bowls at least twice a week; and
- Check window and door screens.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend 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. Consumers should look for products that contain the CDC-recommended ingredients, and should read and follow all label instructions.

“North Carolina summers are wonderful; it is just important to remember to always put on repellent while working or playing outdoors,” Smith said.

Exposure to both mosquitoes and ticks can be limited by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks. People should also check themselves and their families for ticks when in tick-prone areas.

For additional information about preventing mosquito and tick bites, go to the following Web sites: www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm, www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus and www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tick, or contact Hugh Watson, Environmental Health Programs Coordinator, at 252-926-4380.

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