



PRESS RELEASE

July 17, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Residents Urged to be Vigilant Against Mosquito-Borne Illnesses and Leptospirosis

The public health team in southern Jamaica is encouraging residents to be vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases and leptospirosis, as the country, particularly the southern parishes recover from the damages of Hurricane Beryl.

Regional Public Health Specialist for Vector Control at the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), Mr. Michael Myles explained that with the increased rainfall, residents should expect an increase in the breeding of mosquitoes, especially those that carry diseases such as the Aedes Aegypti mosquito and the transmission of leptospirosis.

He noted that there are several things that residents can do to help mitigate against the spread of these illnesses.

For mosquito-borne illnesses such as dengue, Mr. Myles said residents should “search around their homes and communities for mosquito breeding sites and treat, clear or destroy where necessary. Ensure water storage containers are clean and tightly covered to prevent access of vectors, such as mosquitoes, rats etcetera.”

The Vector Control Specialist added that persons should also wear protective clothing and use a DEET-containing mosquito repellent for personal protection.

“There are other things which can be done such as sleeping under mosquito nets, screening windows and doors with mesh and as much as possible stay indoors at dusk and dawn (the peak feeding time for the Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes” Mr. Myles said.

In relation to the spread of leptospirosis, Mr. Myles said residents should avoid swimming or playing in flood waters.

(more)

Chairman: Wayne Chen; Vice Chairman: Michael Stern, **Board Members:** Lorraine Green Mason, Marcus Greenwood, Stafford Haughton, Winston Maragh, Dr. Lloyd Reynolds, Albert Williams, Omar Miller, Dave Powell, **Permanent Secretary's Nominee:** Dr. Naydene Williams, **Regional Director and Secretary:** Michael Bent; **Regional Technical Director:** Dr. Vitillius Holder; **CEO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Alwyn Miller; **SMO, Mandeville Regional Hospital:** Dr. Everton McIntosh

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"Do not eat food or drink fluid contaminated with the urine of rats or animals (goats, cows etcetera.) You should also sanitize using bleach solution on countertops, dish drainers and utensils before use. Wear protective clothing and footwear to prevent exposure to contaminated water or soil. Wash hands with soap and water after handling animals, farming or handling items from buildings infested with rats and use rodenticides with caution" Mr. Myles pointed out.

He added that garbage should be stored in suitable containers with covers and residents should try to make their homes free from access to rodents by blocking small holes and placing a cone barrier on electrical or cable wires to prevent rats from climbing and entering homes.

The SRHA organized a three-day community intervention in the parishes of Clarendon, St. Elizabeth and Manchester from July 10 to 12, to arm residents with useful and practical information about making food and water safe and also about protecting their surroundings from mosquitoes and rodents such as rats.

Picture 1



Regional Public Health Specialist for Vector Control, SRHA, Mr. Michael

(more)

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Myles (right) along with Entomological Assistant from the Clarendon Health Department, Mr. Charles Killingbeck inspect a water container on a property in southern St. Elizabeth.

Picture 2



Vector Control Worker from the Manchester Health Department, Mr. Lamore Bartley, oils a swamp area in southern Manchester to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.

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