



QUABBIN HEALTH DISTRICT

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Serving the Communities of Belchertown, Ware and Pelham, MA

September 15, 2023

West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis Bulletin

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has reported 6 West Nile Virus (WNV) positive mosquitos in Hampshire County. On September 11th, they reported 3 positive human WNV cases in Hampden County. The MDPH reported 7 positive mosquito samples for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Massachusetts, the most recent on September 13th in Brimfield.

Currently, the WNV and EEE risk in for Ware is low, but could change. Being prepared and doing what you can to decrease your risk of mosquito bites is important to avoid potential exposure and illness. There are currently no vaccines or treatments for either WNV or EEE.

The following are symptoms of WNV:

Eight out of ten people exposed to WNV do not develop symptoms. About 1 in 5 of the people who do experience fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash and will recover slowly. About 1 in 150 will develop severe illness, including: high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, and paralysis. People over age 60 are at higher risk for severe illness, along with those with cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, and those who are immunocompromised. Recovery from severe illness may take several weeks or months. Some effects to the central nervous system may be permanent. About 1 in 10 of those who develop severe illness will die.

The following are symptoms of EEE:

Some people exposed to EEE will not develop symptoms. Severe cases of EEE infection begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills, and vomiting that may progress into disorientation, seizures, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), and coma. Approximately a third of patients who develop EEE die, and many of those who survive have mild to severe brain damage.

There are several ways to protect yourself and your family members from mosquito bites:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [*p*-Menthane-3,8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) and follow the instructions on the product label. Do not use DEET products on infants less than 2 months of age. Do not use oil of lemon eucalyptus on children under 3 years of age. Do not apply on skin under clothing.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. Dusk to dawn are peak biting times for mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants, and socks outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin. Gear treated with permethrin offers extra protection. Do not use permethrin directly on skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Drain or discard items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Use tightly fitting screens on all windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Water troughs provide should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to the Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795, and the Department of Public Health by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including WNV and EEE positive results, can be found online at [Mosquito-borne Diseases | Mass.gov](#), or by calling the DPH Division of Epidemiology at 617-983-6800.