



News Release

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For Immediate Release

STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE FIRST EEE- POSITIVE MOSQUITO OF THE SEASON

Residents urged to take personal precautions to avoid getting bitten

BOSTON (September 19, 2018)—The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus has been detected in a mosquito in Massachusetts for the first time this year, following testing completed at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory.

The mosquito samples were collected on August 17 in the town of Lakeville in Plymouth County. This single finding does not indicate elevated risk from EEE at this time, but personal protection from mosquitoes remains a high priority. Mosquito trapping and testing will continue in the area to monitor risk.

There have been no human cases of EEE so far this year and none acquired by a Massachusetts resident in 2017.

“We have been fortunate over the last several years to see little evidence of EEE activity,” said Public Health Commissioner Dr. Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “Despite that, we know EEE occurs in Massachusetts and this is a timely reminder of that fact.”

“The drought in 2015 through 2016 reduced the species of mosquitoes that are responsible for amplifying EEE virus in the bird population,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown. “The last couple of years have been rebuilding years and our job will be to continue to closely monitor EEE activity through the mosquito surveillance done in conjunction with the Mosquito Control Districts.”

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE is generally spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label.

DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Horse, llama and alpaca owners should keep animals in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also 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 DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.