

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus Confirmed in Mosquitoes from Harvard

DATE: 8/21/19 **CONTACT:** Jim Garreff, Nashoba Associated Board of Health
TOWN: Harvard **TELEPHONE:** 978-772-3335
 CONTACT: Tom Philippou, Chair, Harvard Board of Health
 TELEPHONE: 978-456-3853 or 978-641-3853

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced on 8/19/19 that EEE virus has been detected in mosquitos collected from Harvard, Massachusetts; the mosquitos were a mammal-biting species. As a consequence of this detection the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has raise the EEE risk level for Harvard to Moderate.

EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. While EEE can infect people of all ages, people under 15 years of age or over 50 years of age are at greatest risk for serious illness.

By taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones: In addition to the precautions provided below the MDPH recommendations, based on the current risk level, are underlined.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **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. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent. Avoid outside areas with obvious mosquito activity
- **Clothing Can Help** reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin. Use mosquito netting on baby carriages and playpens.
- **Apply Insect Repellent** when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **permethrin**, **picaridin** (KBR 3023), **IR3535** or **oil of lemon eucalyptus** [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] 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. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin. Wear mosquito repellent when outdoors, especially between dawn and dusk.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water** – Many mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens** - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

While the Board of Health continues to work closely with the MDPH and other agencies, we are also making the MDPH fact sheets for EEE available for dissemination on the Board of Health and Town websites, contacting the Council on Aging and the School Superintendent, as well as other Harvard organizations that routinely sponsor outdoor activities, to inform them of the precautions that be taken to minimize the risk of contracting EEE.

Information about EEE and reports of current and historical EEE virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito.