



BOARD OF HEALTH

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**Second Human Case of West Nile Virus (WNV) Reported in MA
is the First in Middlesex County**

NO Human Cases of WNV in Bedford so far this season

August 12, 2024 - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that a second human case of West Nile virus (WNV) was identified in MA, which is the first human case in Middlesex County. In Bedford, there have been no human cases of WNV reported, and only one positive mosquito sample of WNV reported. The risk level for WNV remains moderate in Bedford.

Although serious illness caused by WNV is uncommon, there have been 131 cases of WNV in Massachusetts between 2014 and 2023. There were six human cases of WNV in 2023, eight human cases in 2022, and eleven human cases of WNV in 2021. In addition to the case just identified, there has been one other human WNV cases identified in Massachusetts this year.

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe infection.

August and September are the months when most human cases of WNV occur. WNV carrying mosquitoes like to lay their eggs in catch basins, clogged rain gutters, buckets, and other water holding containers. Residents have an important role to play in reducing the risk of WNV and protecting themselves and their loved ones by taking a few, common-sense precautions and mosquito proofing their property.

Mosquito Control in Bedford

The Bedford Health Department continues to work with the MDPH and the Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control Project (EMMCP) to monitor local mosquito populations for mosquito-borne diseases such as WNV and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Bedford has a robust mosquito control program that includes an annual helicopter application of biological larvicide to wetland areas in town by EMMCP and each summer the Bedford DPW treats catch basins in town. Furthermore, the EMMPC has conducted several truck-mounted and areal sprays in town so far this year. The next truck-mounted spraying is scheduled for tonight, August 12th, between sunset and 11:30PM. Mosquito spraying events are announced via the Health Department website at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/health-department>

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **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.
- **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.
- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours** - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. When risk is increased, 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.

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 your windows and doors.

Information about mosquito activity in Massachusetts may be found on the Mosquito-borne Disease page on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases>. Facts sheets on WNV, EEE and other mosquito-related materials are available by contacting the Bedford Health Department at 781-275-6507 or by accessing the Health Department website at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/health-department>.