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**August 21, 2024**

**Mosquito Populations are High this Summer**

**First Human Case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) reported in MA**

**NO** EEE positive mosquito or human cases in Bedford so far this season

**August 16, 2024-** The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced that the first human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) was identified in Worcester County. The season's first EEE-positive mosquitoes were identified on July 3, 2024, and mosquito samples have tested positive for EEE across the state. In Bedford, there have been **no** mosquito or human cases of EEE reported. The risk level of EEE remains low in Bedford.

This is the first human EEE case reported in Massachusetts since 2020. Between 2000 and 2023, EEE virus has caused 43 human infections in Massachusetts residents with at least 22 deaths.

EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. Most people who get EEE will have no symptoms, while some people will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, joint pain, and muscle pain. In rare cases, EEE can lead to encephalitis, meningitis, and death. 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.

**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 EEE and West Nile Virus (WNV). 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 last truck-mounted spraying occurred August 12<sup>th</sup>. Mosquito spraying events are announced via the Health Department website at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/health-department>.

Residents have an important role to play in reducing the risk of EEE and protecting themselves and their loved ones by taking a few, common-sense precautions and mosquito proofing their property.

### **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>.

Fact 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>.