



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Tel: 617-624-5000
Fax: 617-624-5206
www.mass.gov/dph

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
SECRETARY

CHERYL BARTLETT, RN
COMMISSIONER

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FURTHER INFORMATION:
Anne Roach (617) 624-5006

**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE SECOND ANIMAL CASE
OF EEE IN MASSACHUSETTS**

Residents urged to take precautions against mosquito bites

BOSTON – Thursday, October 16, 2014 - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the second case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) infection detected in a mammal this year. The infection was found in a five year-old horse from Westminster, a town located in Worcester County. The horse had to be euthanized due to the severity of her illness.

This finding will raise the EEE risk level in Westminster to “Critical.” The surrounding towns Fitchburg, Leominster, Princeton, Hubbardston, Gardner and Ashburnham will be raised to “High.” Although these risk levels come with a recommendation to reschedule evening outdoor events, the weather will generally be cool enough that mosquito activity will be minimal.

“Infected mosquitoes continue to be present in our environment and will be around until the first hard frost,” said DPH State Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Catherine Brown. “Although mosquitoes are much less active when temperatures are below 60 degrees, the detection of EEE in a mammal should remind residents to take precautions when outdoors. Use insect repellent, cover up exposed skin, and avoid outdoor activities at dusk and night time, when mosquitoes are at their most active.”

There have been no human cases EEE so far this year. There have been four human cases of West Nile virus (WNV). Last year, there was one case of EEE acquired by a Massachusetts resident. EEE is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

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

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding 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. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and 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 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 diagnosed with 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.

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