



City of Methuen

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

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that EEE virus has been detected in mosquitoes collected from Methuen, Massachusetts. In 2008, 4,575 mosquito samples were tested for EEE virus, and 13 positive samples were identified in Massachusetts. Methuen had no EEE virus positive mosquito samples identified in 2008.

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:

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. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- **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.
- **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.

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 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 Methuen Health Department continues to work closely with the MDPH and other agencies,

locally we work with the Northeast Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management program to reduce the adult mosquito population. We also have produced a show that airs on MCTV about how to protect yourself from mosquito bites and steps that citizens can take to reduce the number of mosquitoes around their home.

Information about EEE and reports of EEE virus activity in Massachusetts during 2009 can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph. Recorded information about EEE is also available by calling the MDPH Public Health Information Line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968).

REPORT FROM METHUEN HEALTH DEPARTMENT NURSE – 9/15/09

I was able to speak with Walter C. Montgomery, Director of the Northeast Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District, our mosquito control program, this morning. The species of mosquito that EEE was detected in was *Culiseta melanura*. **This species does not bite mammals.** It bites birds. The city has a preemptive program and we have done spraying this season to decrease the number of bridge vectors (mosquitoes that bite humans) in the community and does not feel that we need to do any additional spraying at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation and take further steps if necessary. The steps the citizens can take to protect themselves are as follows:

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has changed the risk level in Methuen from "remote" to "low" for EEE on the risk map that the DPH produces

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