

EEE Found in Mosquitoes in Area of Washburn & Logan Streets

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has notified the New Bedford Health Department that a primarily bird-biting / occasional mammal biting mosquito has tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in the area of Washburn and Logan Streets in New Bedford.

The Bristol County Mosquito Control Program completed its spraying program for the season on the week of September 18th. With cooler overnight temperatures, mosquito surveillance is less effective and the small numbers of mosquitoes trapped are not indicative of actual risk. While spraying is no longer an effective tool in reducing the threat under current temperature conditions, other precautionary measures remain effective.

Though populations are declining as we move away from mosquito season and into colder weather, it remains important to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites. Residents are urged to apply mosquito repellent and use clothing to reduce exposed skin.

The risk of mosquito-borne illness typically extends until an area has experienced a hard frost. A hard, or killing frost is defined meteorologically as two consecutive hours of temperatures below 28 degrees Fahrenheit. This will occur at different times for different communities, and there may even be variation within communities based on local geography. Although mosquitoes are not killed until a hard frost occurs, they are extremely unlikely to be active when temperatures fall below 50 degrees in the evening. These conditions are being experienced throughout the region.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- Avoid outside areas with obvious mosquito activity
- Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours – While mosquitoes are out at all hours of the day, their peak biting times are from dusk to dawn. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing, especially if you work or spend a lot of time outdoors.
- 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.