

# Massachusetts public health officials announce season's fifth human case of EEE

*Mosquito repellent is necessary even as temperatures cool.*

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that laboratory testing confirmed the fifth human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, a female in her 60s who was exposed to EEE in Plymouth County. Exposure occurred in an area already known to be at elevated risk for EEE, so no change in the risk level is needed.

Currently, four municipalities are at critical risk, 10 at high risk, and 17 at moderate risk for EEE in the Commonwealth.

More than 95 percent of the EEE cases that have occurred in Massachusetts since 2000 have been exposed to the virus before mid-September. Mosquito populations are declining although some risk will continue until the first hard frost.

All residents are reminded to use mosquito repellent any time they are outside, and those in high and critical risk communities are advised to schedule their outdoor activity to avoid the dusk to dawn hours to reduce exposure to the mosquitoes most likely to spread EEE.

EEE is a rare but potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. There have already been four other human cases identified this year. In 2019, there were 12 human cases of EEE in Massachusetts with 6 deaths.

EEE virus has been found in 65 mosquito samples this year, over 70 percent of them in species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. Information about current

mosquito activity will continue to be updated regularly.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.