

# West Nile Virus detected in latest mosquito sample at New Bedford Business Park

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has notified the New Bedford Health Department of the finding of West Nile Virus in a primarily bird-biting mosquito sample obtained in the area of the New Bedford Business (Industrial) Park, located off of Phillips Road in the far north end of New Bedford. The mosquito is of the *Culiseta melanura* species and is mainly bird-biting.

The New Bedford Health Department and Bristol County Mosquito Control Program has completed its spraying of parks and events for the season. 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.

Like EEE and West Nile, the New Bedford Health Department works closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to track other emerging mosquito-borne diseases such as the Zika virus. While Zika-carrying mosquitoes have not been identified in the New Bedford area, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health reports that the likelihood of becoming infected with Zika virus from a mosquito bite in Massachusetts is very low, residents are urged to take the general precautionary measures to prevent mosquito bites. In addition, travelers to areas where the Zika virus has been detected in mosquitoes or humans should take extra precaution to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes during their trip. This includes both females and males who travel to areas where the Zika virus is occurring. If you or your partner is planning on traveling, you should check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for information about where Zika virus is occurring:  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-information>.