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State Officials Announce Additional Aerial Spraying for EEE in Critical and High Risk Communities

Residents urged to continue to protect themselves against mosquito bites

BOSTON (September 10, 2019) -The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) are urging residents throughout the Commonwealth to continue to take personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites as they announced additional aerial spraying for mosquitoes in areas of the state at critical and high risk for the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus.

MDAR is scheduled to begin aerial spraying this evening and continue into next week in parts of Middlesex, Worcester, and Norfolk counties. While aerial spraying is weather and equipment dependent, above-average evening temperatures this week are likely to permit the application.

Communities that are scheduled to be partially or fully sprayed over the next week include:

- *Norfolk County:* Bellingham, Franklin, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, Medfield, Walpole, Wrentham, Foxborough, Sharon, Norwood, Westwood, Dover, Needham, Wellesley
- *Middlesex County:* Ashland, Hopkinton, Holliston, Sherborn, Framingham, Natick, Wayland, Sudbury, Maynard, Stow, Hudson, Marlborough, Weston
- *Worcester County:* Berlin, Boylston, Northborough, Westborough, Shrewsbury, Grafton, Upton, Milford, Hopedale, Mendon, Blackstone, Millville, Uxbridge, Douglas, Northbridge, Sutton, Millbury, Auburn, Oxford, Webster, Southborough, Bolton, Clinton, West Boylston, Worcester, Charlton, Dudley, Leicester, Harvard

As weather, temperature, and equipment conditions permit, plans for subsequent rounds of spraying will include critical and high-risk communities in the counties of Bristol, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire and Plymouth. Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/eee> for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

So far this season, Massachusetts has had seven human cases of EEE. One person has died. There have also been nine confirmed cases of EEE this year in animals, including eight horses and a goat.

There are 36 communities now at critical risk, 42 at high risk, and 115 at moderate risk for the EEE virus in Massachusetts. A map of the state's current EEE risk levels can be found [here](#).

“Even as temperatures cool, it’s vitally important for us to remember that mosquito season is not over and that we all need to continue to take steps to prevent mosquito bites,” said **Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel**, MD, MPH. “Use bug spray, wear long sleeves and pants to reduce exposed skin, and stay indoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.”

“We continue to urge the public to protect themselves from this disease by using mosquito repellent and taking other precautions, and for those in high and critical risk areas, by rescheduling outdoor activities during evening hours,” said **MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux**. “In addition to these precautions, we will be conducting additional aerial spraying and supporting the use of truck-based ground spraying to reduce the numbers of infected adult mosquitoes left flying at this point in the season.”

Additionally, MDAR reminds horse owners to promptly vaccinate their horses to ensure proper protection from EEE. If your horse was already vaccinated this year, MDAR advises checking with your veterinarian about a booster. Previously vaccinated horses may quickly respond to a booster vaccine and readily develop protective antibody. Horses of unknown vaccination status should receive two vaccines the first year. Foals should be vaccinated as soon as they are old enough (3-4 months of age) and need a second booster vaccine for adequate protection.

Last month, MDAR conducted aerial mosquito spraying in parts of Bristol, Plymouth, Middlesex, and Worcester counties to help reduce the public health risk. Meanwhile local communities are continuing truck-mounted ground spraying for mosquitoes. Spraying for mosquitoes does not eliminate the risk of EEE transmission and the public is asked to continue to follow personal protection practices.

Residents can learn more about EEE and ways to protect themselves on DPH’s website [here](#).

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 400 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people.

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 an EPA-registered ingredient (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 in areas of high risk.

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 draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the 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 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 suspected of having 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.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage <https://www.mass.gov/eee>.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

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