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Mosquito Populations are High this Summer

Bedford Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Risk Increased to Moderate
NO Human or Mosquito EEE in Bedford so far this season

September 9, 2024 - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today another human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), bringing the total of human EEE cases in Massachusetts to four. The most recent case of EEE is a man in his 50s, exposed to EEE in central Middlesex County. This announcement comes three days after another EEE human positive case was announced in Middlesex County. As a result, many towns in central Middlesex County have increased their risk of EEE to high, including Carlisle. In response, Carlisle has initiated a public health advisory.

To date, no mosquitoes have been found to carry EEE in Bedford, and there have been no human cases of EEE in Bedford. Due to this recent EEE case, the risk of EEE in Bedford has **elevated to moderate**.

These risk levels are developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) mosquito-borne illness surveillance, and risk levels are assigned based on MDPH's data. You can view the map and details here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update>.

- **What it means to be moderate risk:** The EEE risk in Bedford has increased to moderate because EEE has occurred in our area within the last year and/or there is EEE in mosquitoes in our area now
- **What we can do:**
 - Repair window screens
 - Wear mosquito repellent between dusk and dawn
 - Wear long sleeves and long pants from dusk to dawn
 - Use mosquito netting on baby carriages and playpens
 - **Added recommendations for MODERATE risk:** adjust outdoor activity to avoid peak mosquito hours (from dusk to dawn)
 - **Added recommendations for MODERATE risk:** avoid overnight camping, particularly near freshwater swamps where EEE activity is most likely

EEE is most commonly transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry these viruses are common throughout the state and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. EEE will have no symptoms, while some people will develop

symptoms such as fever, headache, joint pain, and muscle pain. In some cases, EEE can lead to encephalitis, meningitis, and death. While EEE can infect people of all ages, there are a couple of age groups at higher risk. Those at higher risk for getting EEE are people over 50 years of age as well as under 15 years of age.

Mosquito Control in Bedford

The Bedford Health Department continues to work with the MDPH and the Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control Project (EMMCP) to monitor local mosquito populations for mosquito-borne diseases such as WNV and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Bedford has a robust mosquito control program that includes an annual helicopter application of biological larvicide to wetland areas in town by EMMCP and each summer the Bedford DPW treats catch basins in town. Furthermore, the EMMPC has conducted several truck mounted and areal sprays in town so far this year. Bedford recently had a truck-mounted mosquito spraying on August 21st, 2024. Mosquito spraying events are announced via the Health Department website at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/health-department>.

Take precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones against EEE and mosquito-borne illnesses:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **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.
- **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.
- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours** - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. When risk is increased, consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water** – Many 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 your windows and doors.

Information about mosquito activity in Massachusetts may be found on the Mosquito-borne Disease page on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases>. or by accessing the Health Department website at <https://www.bedfordma.gov/health-department>.