



Town of Canton, Massachusetts

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PRESS RELEASE

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Risk in Canton

August 5, 2010

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has announced that the risk for eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) in people has increased in a large part of southeastern Massachusetts. EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. While EEE can infect people of all ages, people under age 15 or over age 50 are at greatest risk for serious illness. At this writing, however, Canton has not seen any mosquito pools testing positive for EEE, nor any incidences of mammals being infected with the disease.

Recently, the State conducted the first areal spraying of a pesticide (Anvil) in several years. In past years, aerial spraying was only done in early spring with Bti which is a biologically active larvicide that targets only immature mosquito larvae. Anvil is a relatively safe pesticide that will kill adult mosquitoes on contact but it has a half-life of only about 6 hours before it is completely degraded. It is safe for people and pets and is used in such small quantities that even bees are not affected.

As Canton has not been found to have any incidences of EEE so far, it was not included in this pesticide spraying event. As the season progresses however, this could change and Canton residents would be notified if the aerial spraying was going to take place. In the meantime, by taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones from EEE:

AVOID MOSQUITO BITES

- 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. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- 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, Permethrin, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus 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.

Information about EEE can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph under A for arbovirus in the Health Topics Index. Recorded information about EEE is also available by calling the MDPH Public Health Information Line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968).

Submitted,

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