



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus Detected in South Central Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced the first human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) since 2020 in Worcester County. As a result, the Towns of Douglas, Oxford, Sutton, and Webster are now **Critical Risk** for EEE.

EEE is a rare but serious illness that can cause severe neurological complications. Symptoms typically appear 5-10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and include high fever (103-106°F), stiff neck, headache, and fatigue.

There is no treatment for EEE. In Massachusetts, about half of the people identified with EEE die from the infection. People who survive this disease will often be permanently disabled. Few people recover completely.

Health Departments for Douglas, Oxford, Sutton, and Webster urge residents in our communities to take the following precautions, consistent with Massachusetts DPH recommendations:

- **Apply Insect Repellent:** Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient, such as DEET, permethrin, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Follow product label instructions carefully. DEET should not be used on infants under two months old, and oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three.
- **Avoid of Peak Mosquito Hours:** The hours from Dusk to Dawn are peak mosquito biting times for many mosquitoes. It is strongly recommended to finish outdoor activities before 6:00 PM through September 30th, 2024 and before 5:00 PM October 1st, 2024 until the first hard frost.
- **Wear Protective Clothing:** Long sleeves, long pants, and socks can help prevent mosquito bites when outdoors.
- **Mosquito Proof Your Home:** Mosquitoes breed in standing water. Drain or discard items that collect water, such as buckets, tires, flowerpots, and birdbaths. Install or repair window screens.

For more information about EEE and prevention, visit: [EEE \(Eastern Equine Encephalitis\) | Mass.gov](#)

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