



TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

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FIRST ANIMAL CASE OF EEE DIAGNOSED IN PLYMOUTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8/7/2024

PLYMOUTH, Mass. – Yesterday, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced the state’s first animal case of Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) this year.

The EEE infection was diagnosed in a horse exposed in Plymouth, raising the Town’s EEE risk level to high. This is in addition to Carver and Middleborough, the two communities currently at high risk for EEE.

There have also been EEE-infected mosquitoes previously identified in Plymouth County (Halifax and Kingston), Barnstable County (Barnstable), and in Essex County (Amesbury and Haverhill).

Per the DPH, EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages and is generally spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. There were 12 human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2019 with six deaths, and five human cases with one death in 2020. There were no human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2021, 2022, or 2023. No human cases of EEE have been detected so far this year.

“As Mass DPH has now elevated Plymouth’s EEE risk status to high, it is important to take extra precautions when outdoors and follow state and local health guidelines to avoid unnecessary risk exposure to EEE. The health and safety of our community, residents, and visitors remain our priority,” **said Plymouth’s Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Michelle Bratti.**

The Plymouth County Mosquito Control Project has begun spraying, starting in South Plymouth and will continue to spray between the hours of 2 a.m. until sunrise, weather permitting.

Spray routes will be posted daily at <https://www.plymouthmosquito.org/spray-routes-for-adult-mosquito-control.html>.

Residents may request additional spraying by completing a spray request form found here: https://0201.nccdn.net/1_2/000/000/089/fa8/spray-form-2.pdf.

To protect yourself and loved ones from mosquito bites and the diseases that can be transmitted, it is important to follow tips found on the Massachusetts Department of Health's website listed below:

- **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient, such as DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), or oil of lemon eucalyptus (p-menthane-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 percent 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 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 provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and 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 the Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal

Health by calling 617-626-1795, and to the Department of Public Health by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV- and EEE-positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [Mosquito-borne Diseases | Mass.gov](#), which is updated daily, or by calling the DPH Division of Epidemiology at 617-983-6800.

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