



Northeast District Department of Health

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PRESS RELEASE

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NDDH Warns of Mosquito-Transmitted Illnesses

SWAT Campaign Helps Residents to Remember Prevention Tips

(BROOKLYN) – The Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) is reminding residents to take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are two diseases transmitted by infected mosquitoes that are of particular concern in the late summer and fall. The State Mosquito Management Program reports that an increasing number of mosquitoes trapped by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station are testing positive for WNV and EEE.

Both WNV and EEE can cause severe disease in humans. While WNV infections are usually not fatal, patients who develop meningitis or encephalitis may suffer long lasting symptoms of the nervous system. EEE is one of the most severe mosquito-transmitted diseases in the country. It is a rare but potentially deadly disease. A fatal human infection of EEE in eastern Connecticut was recorded in 2013.

Horses and other animals can also contract WNV and EEE. Horse owners are reminded to review vaccination records with their veterinarians to ensure that EEE and WNV vaccinations are current and their horses are protected during the mosquito season.

Residents of Connecticut are at highest risk of acquiring WNV and EEE infections in August and September when the number of infected mosquitoes peaks. To help residents lower their risk of acquiring mosquito-borne illnesses, NDDH developed the *SWAT* campaign that offers tips to avoid being bitten.

“*SWAT* is an easy acronym to remember to prevent mosquito bites,” said Susan Starkey, NDDH Director of Health. “*Screens* on doors and windows should be tight-fitting and in good repair; *Wear* protective clothing such as shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts to cover bare skin; *Apply* insect repellent according to instructions when going outdoors and be particularly careful at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Most importantly, *Toss* any standing water that may be collecting on your property. Water in wading pools, bird baths, buckets, barrels, flower pots, pet dishes, and tire swings should be changed or emptied regularly. Clogged roof gutters should be cleaned. These simple steps can help you reduce the risk for you and people you care about.”

Connecticut Mosquito Management Program

The response to mosquito transmitted diseases in Connecticut is a collaborative inter-agency effort involving the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Connecticut. These agencies are responsible for monitoring mosquito populations and the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases. The CAES maintains a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state. CAES begins mosquito trapping and testing in June and continues into October.

For information on WNV and EEE, what can be done to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes, the latest mosquito test results and human infections, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program web site at <https://portal.ct.gov/Mosquito>.

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