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PRESS RELEASE

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Powassan Virus (POWV) Infection - Positive Case Identified in Brooklyn

BROOKLYN – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) announced yesterday that four Connecticut residents have tested positive for Powassan virus (POWV) infection.

These four cases of POWV are the first to be identified in Connecticut this year. During 2016–2022, 19 cases of POWV associated illness were reported in Connecticut, including six in 2022; two of the infections were fatal last year.

Two male patients aged 60 years and older, residents of Middlesex County and Litchfield County, became ill during early July. Two female patients aged 50 years and older, one from Litchfield County and the other from Brooklyn in Windham County, became ill during late July. Laboratory tests performed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Laboratory in Ft. Collins, CO, confirmed the presence of antibodies to POWV for all patients. All patients reported a known tick bite and were hospitalized with a central nervous system disease. They have been discharged and are recovering.

Powassan virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks become infected when they feed on groundhogs, squirrels, mice, or other rodents that have the virus in their blood. Infected ticks can then spread Powassan virus to people and other animals by biting them.

The virus is not transmitted from person to person, except in rare instances by blood transfusion. Because the virus can be transmitted through blood, persons who were recently diagnosed with Powassan virus infection should not donate blood and bone marrow for 120 days following infection.

Powassan virus disease is spread to people through the bite of an infected Black-legged (“deer”) tick (*Ixodes scapularis*). This is a rare, emerging infection in the United States and human cases have been identified in Connecticut.

Reduce your risk of getting sick by:

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood.
- **Treat clothing and gear** with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
- Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellent](#) [external icon](#) containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. EPA’s helpful [search tool](#) [external icon](#) can help you find the product that best suits your needs. Always follow product instructions. Do not use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old.
- **Avoid Contact with Ticks**
 - Avoid wooded and brushy areas with tall grass and leaf litter.
 - Walk in the center of trails.

Dogs are very susceptible to tick bites and tickborne diseases. Vaccines are not available for most of the tickborne diseases that dogs can get, and they do not keep the dogs from bringing ticks into your home. For these reasons, it is important to use a tick preventive product on your dog.

Tick bites on dogs may be hard to detect. Signs of tickborne disease may not appear for 7-21 days or longer after a tick bite, so watch your dog closely for changes in behavior or appetite if you suspect that your pet has been bitten by a tick.

For additional information on Powassan virus disease visit [CT DPH](#) and [CDC](#) resources.

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