



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD  
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH  
COMMISSIONER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
September 10, 2012

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
Anne Roach (617) 624-5006

**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE THIRD HUMAN CASE OF EASTERN  
EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS IN MASSACHUSETTS**

*Residents urged to take precautions against mosquito bites until first hard frost*

**BOSTON** – Monday, September 10, 2012 – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the third human case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a Massachusetts resident. The patient, a female under the age of 18, was diagnosed in early September and is currently hospitalized.

Based on this finding, the EEE threat level has been raised in several towns in Franklin County and Worcester County. The EEE threat level has been raised to “Critical” in Athol, Orange, and Royalston, and to “High” in Erving, Petersham, Phillipston, Templeton, Warwick, Wendell, and Winchendon. Communities which have been designated at either “Critical” or “High” risk of EEE are urged to cancel all planned evening outdoor events for the remainder of the season until the first hard frost.

“Any diagnosis of EEE is concerning – but especially so when it involves a young person,” said DPH Commissioner John Auerbach. “Our thoughts and prayers are with her parents and family. In the meantime, this is a compelling reminder that we all need to continue to be vigilant in protecting ourselves and our families against mosquito bites and the very serious illnesses they can cause.”

Health officials have also detected a third case of EEE in a horse stabled in Rochester. Based on this diagnosis, the EEE threat level has been raised to “Critical” in Rochester and to “High” in Acushnet, Freetown, Marion, and Wareham. Communities which have been designated at either “Critical” or “High” risk of EEE are urged to cancel all planned evening outdoor events for the remainder of the season until the first hard frost. Mosquito control projects will be increasing ground spraying activities in these communities.

-more-

### **Third Human Case of EEE, page 2 of 3**

“People sometimes think that the threat of mosquitoes is over when summer ends, but the fact is that mosquitoes continue to be active well into the fall,” said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Al DeMaria. “That’s why it’s so important that we stay on guard against mosquito bites – use insect repellent, cover up exposed skin, and avoid outdoor activities at dusk and nighttime when mosquitoes are at their most active. “

There have now been three confirmed human cases of EEE in Massachusetts residents this year, including one case that resulted in the death of a Worcester man in his 70s. . There were two cases of EEE in August of last year acquired in Massachusetts; a fatal case in a Bristol County man and an infection in a tourist from out of state. EEE activity in both 2010 and 2011 raised public concern and prompted DPH to work with a panel of experts to evaluate and enhance the state’s surveillance and response program. EEE is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Initial symptoms of EEE are fever (often 103° to 106°F), stiff neck, headache, and lack of energy, and in severe cases can progress to confusion, disorientation, and coma. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

#### **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 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% 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.

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 either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

-more-

### **Third Human Case of EEE, page 3 of 3**

**Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your 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. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results from 2012, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [www.mass.gov/dph/wnv](http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv) or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800. The findings of the DPH Eastern Equine Encephalitis Expert Panel can be found [here](#).

# # #