

Public Health Education: Mosquito Bites

Mosquitoes can spread diseases that make you sick. In Massachusetts, mosquitoes can give you eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus and West Nile virus (WNV).

Prevention is the key to avoiding these infections!

- Use **DEET mosquito repellent** any time you are outdoors. Even being outside a short time can be long enough to get a mosquito bite. Follow directions on the insect repellent directions label.
- When the weather permits, wear **long-sleeves, long pants and socks** when outdoors.
- Avoid peak mosquito hours, from **dusk to dawn**.
- Remove areas of standing water around your home and outdoor living areas (mosquitos can multiply in ANY standing water, including a puddle).

What kind of mosquito repellent should I use?

Repellents that contain **DEET, permethrin, picaridin or IR3535** provide protection against mosquitoes. In addition, **oil of lemon eucalyptus** has been found to provide as much protection as low concentrations of DEET. Permethrin products are intended to be used on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to the skin. Apply the permethrin to your clothes before you put them on and follow the instructions on the label. Different repellents work against different bugs. It is important to look at the active ingredient on the product label.

Risk for EEE and WNV

SALEM is REMOTE risk for EEE and MODERATE risk for WNV (09/23/2024)

EEE risk is low to moderate in northern Essex county (09/23/2024)

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update> (for updates)

High: more people may get infected in this area

Moderate: an infection is likely or has already occurred

Low: infection is unlikely

Remote: not usually found in this area



More about EEE

EEE is a very rare disease. Since it was first identified in Massachusetts in 1938, just over 115 cases have occurred. Outbreaks of EEE typically occur every 10-20 years, with the last outbreak in 2019-2020 including 17 cases and 7 fatalities.

EEE symptoms include a high fever of 103-106F, stiff neck, headache, and lack of energy occurring 3-10 days after a bite from an infected mosquito. Inflammation and swelling of the brain, called encephalitis, is the most dangerous and frequent serious complication resulting in hospitalization. There is no treatment for EEE and people who survive the disease are often permanently disabled.

For more information please visit www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito

If you have further questions please contact your primary care provider or Counseling & Health services, 978.542.6413 or www.salemstate.edu/healthportal

