



Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Eastern Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus which can sometimes be fatal. The virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. In Massachusetts, the virus is most often identified in mosquitoes found in and around freshwater, hardwood swamps. EEE virus infects birds, often with no evidence of illness in the bird. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite infected birds. Although humans and several other types of mammals, particularly horses and llamas, can become infected, they do not spread disease. More information about different types of mosquitoes that can spread the virus can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph

If you reduce your exposure to adult mosquitoes, you reduce the potential for infection. Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) determines whether a particular county or area is at higher risk for human exposure. This is monitored by testing mosquito pools which are situated across the state. As of the end of July no pools have tested positive in our town, but the Health Department continues to recommend a proactive approach and encourages everyone to take the following preventative steps to minimize exposures.

How to prevent mosquitoes

- Mosquitoes need still water to develop. Look around outside your house for containers and other things that might collect water and turn them over, regularly empty them, or dispose of them.
- Cover recycling bins and trash containers, flatten or punch holes in cans and containers
- Dispose of, or cover old tires.
- Frequently change water in bird bath and pet dishes. Stagnant water attracts mosquitoes.
- Stock ornamental pools with fish.
- Keep buckets, barrels, tubs, toys, and coolers turned upside down or covered.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property.
- Clean clogged roof gutters; remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of rainwater.

- Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated.

How to avoid mosquito bites.....

- Check and repair all window and door screens for holes or cracks
- Avoid areas of high mosquito concentrations during dusk and dawn
- Use a repellent containing **DEET** or **oil of lemon eucalyptus** according to the instructions given on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age. Avoid concentrations above 10-15% for children and concentrations above 30-35 % for adults. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Cream, lotion or stick formula is the best.
- When you are outdoors, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and socks especially with children when playing outdoors. Use netting to cover a baby's carriage or playpen. This may be difficult to do when the weather is hot, but it will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin..

Pesticide Spraying for Mosquitoes in Westford

Here in Westford, the town participates in the Central Mass Mosquito Control Project. This organization will provide spraying of your private property at no cost to you.

You can request service by calling (508) 393-3055 or by applying for service on their website at <http://www.cmmcp.org>. Their website provides information on services, what pesticides they use, virus information, testing information and what areas of town have already been sprayed. You can also request to have your property not be sprayed in case an abutting neighbor decides

What is the Town's Pesticide Policy for spraying town owned properties?

- The Town of Westford does not allow applications of pesticides on town owned properties, except when the Board of Health deems the situation a Public Health Emergency in consultation with MDPH.
- Please contact the Westford Health Department at 978-692-5509 for a copy of the Westford Pesticide Use Policy. The fee is \$10.00. For a free copy of the policy please see the Westford Health Department website at <http://www.westfordma.gov>. (Under "Regulations").

More information on choosing and using repellents safely is included in the MDPH Fact Sheet on Mosquito Repellents which can be viewed online at www.mass.gov/dph. If you can't go online, contact the MDPH at (617) 983-6800 for a hard copy.