



[Home >](#)

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EEE Persists in Freetown Mosquitoes

Health officials remind residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

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BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today that Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) has been found in a sample of mosquitoes from Freetown. This sample comes from the same location where the season’s first EEE mosquito sample was collected on July 20th.

“Each year, we always hope that there won’t be any humans affected by EEE,” said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Alfred DeMaria. “This positive mosquito sample serves to remind us that the virus is around and can pose a risk, especially in southeastern Massachusetts. However, we always recommend that people use mosquito repellent and cover up to protect themselves no matter where they are.”

There was one human case of EEE during 2008; however there were 13 cases with six deaths from 2004 through 2006. EEE is usually spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is a serious disease in all ages and can even cause death.

All positive mosquito results from 2009 can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at www.westnile.ashtonweb.com.

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

Avoid Mosquito Bites

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.

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.

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.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

More information is available on the DPH website: www.mass.gov/dph/wnv. Information about West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis is also available by calling the DPH recorded information line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968), or the Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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