



Home >

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

Contact:

Tom Lyons
Tom.Lyons@state.ma.us
617-624-5275

July 23, 2009 - For immediate release:

First West Nile Virus Positive Mosquito Sample in Massachusetts

Cover up or wear bug spray to avoid getting bitten.

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The mosquito sample was collected on July 21st in the town of **Walpole** in Norfolk County. Earlier this week, health officials announced that a mosquito sample infected with Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) had been identified in the town of Freetown.

There have been no human cases of WNV or EEE so far this year.

There have been sixteen cases of WNV in humans during the last five years. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

“West Nile virus has come around again, as we expect it will every year” said DPH State Epidemiologist, Dr. Al DeMaria “Just take a moment to do something to protect yourself from mosquito bites by using clothing to cover up or applying bug spray. Getting rid of any accumulated water around your yard will also help keep more mosquitoes from breeding.”

WNV positive mosquito results from 2009 can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at 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 WNV and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) 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.

###