

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



Department of Health & Human Services

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## Eastern Equine Encephalitis

### What is Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)?

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a virus that causes an infection that results in swelling of the brain. The disease is found in both horses and man. In a small percentage of people infected by the virus, the disease can be serious, even fatal. The elderly and the very young are most susceptible to this disease.

### How is Eastern Equine Encephalitis spread?

EEE is spread to humans or animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito is infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. A human or horse that becomes infected with the disease cannot spread the virus. The risk of getting EEE is highest from late July through September

### Is Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Michigan?

Human cases of EEE are rare, with less than 100 human cases identified nationally between 1978 and 2001. The first case of EEE was identified in Michigan in 1980, with sporadic human cases reported during the following decade. In recent years, human cases of EEE have been reported in Southeastern Michigan. Federal, state and local officials continue to closely monitor the spread of this disease.

### What is the treatment?

Doctors can treat the symptoms of EEE; however, there is no medication or vaccine for this infection.

### What are the symptoms?

Most people show no symptoms or have mild symptoms that include fever, headache, and body aches, often with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. More severe cases of the disease include headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, coma, tremors, paralysis and death.

### What can you do to protect yourself?

The best way to protect yourself is to prevent mosquitoes from biting you. Reduce mosquito bites by:

- Eliminating standing water that collects in birdbaths, boats, buckets, tires, unused pools, roof gutters and Other containers.
- Using insect repellents. Insect repellents containing no more than 35% DEET works best. Follow Label directions carefully. Do not use repellents on children younger than two years of age. Repellants should be used sparingly on children 2 – 6 years of age containing only 10% DEET.
- Wearing protective clothing such as long sleeved shirts and pants.
- Limiting evening outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active.
- Avoiding shaded areas where mosquitoes may be resting.
- Maintaining window and door screening to keep mosquitoes out of buildings

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## **Why report dead birds?**

Dead birds should be reported to Oakland County Health Division's Environmental Health Services Unit at 1 (877) 377-3641. Avoid barehanded contact with dead birds and other animals. Use gloves or double plastic bags. Keeping track of the locations of dead birds may be important in determining the level of human risk in a particular area.

## **What is the Oakland County Health Division doing to protect people from EEE?**

The Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) has a long-standing program to look for viruses carried by mosquitoes. Every year from May until the first frost, OCHD field staff collect mosquitoes for testing. Mosquito collection has been increased with more sites being sampled. Also, a system is in place to test dead birds to look for the presence of encephalitis causing diseases. If EEE is found in Oakland County, OCHD will alert hospitals and inform the public of ways to prevent infection.

## **For more information on Eastern Equine Encephalitis or to report dead birds, contact Oakland County Health Division Environmental Health Services Hotline 1-(877) 377-3641.**

### **State Contact**

Michigan Department of Agriculture

1-888-668-0869

[www.mda.state.mi.us/consumer/westnilevirus/](http://www.mda.state.mi.us/consumer/westnilevirus/)

### **National Contact**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Fax: 970-221-6476

E-mail: [dvbid@cdc.gov](mailto:dvbid@cdc.gov)

Web Site: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/dvbid.htm>

CDC Information Service: 1-888-232-3228

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