



Keep an Eye out for EEE

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Eastern equine encephalitis, also known as “EEE”, is a rare and often fatal brain infection that can affect people of all ages.¹ A person contracts the disease when they are bitten by an infected mosquito, usually found near freshwater, hardwood swamps^{1,2}. In 2019, the Department of Public Health saw the disease for the first-time since 2012. In response to the presence of EEE in Massachusetts parks closed at dusk and schools had to change game and practice schedules for outside sports; even with these precautions twelve became infected and half of them died.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health describes the onset of symptoms as, “fever (often 103° to 106°F), stiff neck, headache, and lack of energy” three to ten days after a mosquito bite. The disease can progress quickly with some patients going into a coma within a week.

Below are examples of habits and precautions you can take to reduce you and your families’ risk of being bitten²:

- Avoid scheduling outdoor events during the hours between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Cover your skin while outside, even when it is difficult and the weather is hot. This includes wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks.

- Use products with DEET, permethrin, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus to repel mosquitos. Make sure to use the products as described on the product label. There are certain age restrictions and some products are only meant for your clothes, not skin.
- Repair holes in screens, windows, doors to keep mosquitoes out of your house.
- Remove any standing water near your house. Places to look include:
 - Planters, buckets, recycling containers, wading pools, pool covers, wheelbarrows; turn them over, regularly empty them, or dispose of them
 - Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outside to let water drain out
 - Clean clogged roof gutters; remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of rainwater
 - Change the water in birdbaths every few days; aerate ornamental ponds or stock them with fish
 - Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated
 - Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property
- More information on choosing and using repellents safely is included in the MDPH Mosquito Repellents fact sheet which can be viewed online at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito. If you can't go online, contact the MDPH at (617) 983-6800 for a hard copy

See below for where to find more information on:

- **EEE.** contact the DPH Division of Epidemiology (617) 983-6800 or visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito.
- **Mosquito control**, contact the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board at (508) 281-6786.
- **Mosquitos in your area**, contact your local health department.
- **Aerial spraying**, contact MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (508) 281-6786.

1 <https://www.mass.gov/guides/eee-in-massachusetts>

2 <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/eee-eastern-equine-encephalitis>