

## **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)**

There is a new mosquito born virus that is spreading across Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, New Jersey, Michigan and now Wisconsin. The name of the virus is Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The EEE virus is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE is one of the most severe mosquito-transmitted diseases in the United States with approximately 33% mortality and significant brain damage in most survivors. The risk is highest for people who live in or visit swampy habitats in coastal regions or along the Great Lakes, and people who work outside or participate in outdoor recreational activities.

**For those who develop a systemic infection, symptoms can appear suddenly and last up to two weeks, they include: Chills, Fever, Joint and Muscle pain.**

**For those who develop the encephalitic infection, the following symptoms typically follow a few days of systemic illness: Fever, Headache, Irritability, Restlessness, Drowsiness, Disorientation, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Convulsions and Coma.**

Severe cases of the EEE virus begin with the sudden onset of headaches, high fever, chills and vomiting. Approximately one third of patients who develop EEE die. It takes 4 to 10 days after a bite to develop symptoms and can only be diagnosed through blood tests or spinal fluid. There is also no specific treatment for EEE. Antibiotics are not effective against the virus and no effective anti-viral drugs have been discovered.

### **Prevention:**

There is no vaccine or preventative drug for EEE, avoiding mosquito bites is the main source of prevention.

- Wearing long sleeve shirts and pants when weather permits.
- Spraying your clothing with repellent containing DEET can help with preventing mosquitos from biting you.
- Stay indoors at dusk or after dark when mosquitos are most active.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from pails, flower pots, barrels and other containers.
- Babies younger than 2 months old should not use insect repellent. Instead:
  - Dress your child in clothing that covers their arms and legs.
  - Cover strollers and baby carriers with mosquito netting.