



NEWS FROM MONROE COUNTY

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, August 20, 2024

NYS Department of Health Notification of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in Wayne County

EEE is a viral disease spread by mosquitoes

ROCHESTER, NY — The Monroe County Department of Public Health (MCDOH) received notification of a positive report of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in the Town of Galen in Wayne County. Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare, but serious viral disease spread by mosquitoes that can affect people and horses. Unvaccinated horses are very vulnerable to the EEE virus (EEEV) and die from the disease if infected. The death of a horse from EEE indicates there are mosquitoes in Wayne County carrying the EEEV.

People of all ages are susceptible to infection, but people over 50 and younger than 15 are at greatest risk of acquiring the virus. While most people bitten by an infected mosquito will not develop any symptoms, severe cases may begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills, and vomiting. In extreme cases, the illness may progress into disorientation, seizures, encephalitis, and coma. The disease is fatal to about a third of people who show severe symptoms.

Due to the proximity of Wayne County, Acting Monroe County Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Marielena Vélez de Brown urges all residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites and seek medical attention if EEE symptoms are present.

There are EEE and West Nile Virus vaccines available for horses. Call your veterinarian for further information.

There is no human vaccine for EEE. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid mosquito bites. Mosquitoes are most active from dusk to dawn. MCDPH is urging residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites and protect themselves from potential exposure to the mosquito borne illness until the first hard frost by:

- Using insect repellent properly. The most effective insect repellents contain DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, but you should use them with care. Read the product label and use according to package instructions.
- Limiting outdoor activities in areas where mosquitoes are most active and between dusk and dawn which is the peak mosquito biting time.
- If you have to be outside, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks as weather permits.

- Repairing or replacing all window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Reducing or eliminating all standing water.
- Emptying or disposing of pails, cans, flower pots, or similar water-holding containers.
- Clearing roof gutters, removing leaf debris from yards and gardens, and cleaning vegetation and debris from the edge of ponds.
- Turning over wheelbarrows and wading pools when not in use.
- Cleaning and chlorinating swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs and drain pool covers.
- Changing the water in birdbaths and horse troughs twice a week.
- Disposing properly of old tires or any other area that can collect water where mosquitos breed.

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