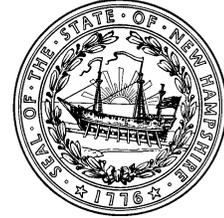


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Health Department Encourages New Hampshire Residents to Take Precautions against Mosquito- Borne Diseases

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is encouraging residents and visitors to the State to take precautions against mosquito bites this season to prevent West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Mosquitoes are already out and the most likely time for them to spread disease is June through September.

During 2011, nine batches of mosquitoes tested positive for WNV and no samples tested positive for EEE. In 2010, one animal and one person tested positive for WNV and one animal tested positive for EEE.

“New Hampshire has been dealing with WNV since 2002 and with EEE since 2004,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS, “and while the number of positive results has been decreasing of late, there is still a risk. It is therefore important that we remind residents that these diseases are preventable. It is essential that people follow precautionary steps, most importantly using an insect repellent, to avoid becoming infected by one of these diseases.”

Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus are transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. EEE is a serious disease that carries a high mortality rate for those who contract the serious encephalitis form of the illness. Symptoms may include high fever, severe headache, and sore throat. A stiff neck is also a symptom of the severe form of the disease, which can lead to seizures and coma. Symptoms usually occur 4 to 10 days after someone is bitten.

For individuals who are bitten by a mosquito carrying West Nile Virus, the risk of contracting the infection is low and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, there are no symptoms or just mild, flu-like symptoms. At times, West Nile Virus can cause meningitis and can be a serious threat to seniors, young children, and those with compromised immune systems. If illness does occur, it typically happens within 3 to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Precautionary steps everyone should take to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes include:

- Using an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 against mosquitoes

- more -

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors when mosquitoes are biting
- Make sure to remove standing water around your home where mosquitoes can breed, such as in tires, flower pots, or pool covers
- Make sure screens on windows and doors fit tightly and do not have holes
- Monitor yourself if you are bitten by mosquitoes and tell your healthcare provider if you develop any symptoms of WNV or EEE

For more information about WNV, EEE, or Lyme disease, visit the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov, or call the DHHS Communicable Disease Control Section at 1-800-852-3345 x4496.

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