



Mosquito Alert: Know the Risks and Stop the Spread

Mosquitoes are small insects that bite and can spread diseases. In Massachusetts, the most common diseases carried by mosquitos are West Nile Virus ([WNV](#)) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis ([EEE](#)). These diseases can cause serious illness and make people of all ages very sick.

Mosquitoes that carry disease are usually found near places like lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, and areas where water collects and doesn't move. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health ([DPH](#)) carefully tracks mosquito activity to help keep people safe.

According to the CDC, about 80% of people who get WNV do not show any symptoms ([Clinical Signs and Symptoms of West Nile Virus Disease | West Nile Virus | CDC](#)). When symptoms do occur, they are usually mild, such as a low fever, feeling very tired, or having a headache. In rare cases, the illness can be more serious and affect the brain or spinal cord. This can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or swelling of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).

To learn more about WNV, please visit the Massachusetts DPH webpage at:
[West Nile Virus \(WNV\) | Mass.gov](#)

Symptoms of EEE usually start 4-10 days after a bite from an infected mosquito. EEE is rare but it is a very serious disease that affects the brain and nervous system. Symptoms can include sudden high fevers, chills, very bad headaches, vomiting, muscle pain, confusion, and seizures. Serious cases may result in a coma.

To learn more about EEE, please visit the Massachusetts DPH webpage at:
[Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\)](#).

People can protect themselves from mosquito-borne diseases. Staff also play an important role in protecting people they support. Please follow this guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health ([DPH](#)):



Health Services Department of Developmental Services

- **Avoid Peak Mosquito Hours:** Schedule outdoor events to avoid the hours between dusk (sunset/twilight) and dawn (sunrise), when mosquitoes are most active.
- **Wear Protective Clothing:** When outdoors, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and socks. This may be difficult to do when the weather is hot, but it will help keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- **Avoid mosquito bites:** Use a bug spray/[repellent](#) that contains one of the following ingredients:
 - **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m toluamide) (do not use on infants under 2 months of age. Use in concentrations of 30% or less on children)
 - **Picaridin** (KBR 3023)
 - **Permethrin**, (for clothing or shoes only. Do not apply directly on skin. Can also be used on nets and camping gear)
 - **IR3535** (3-[N-butyl-N-acetyl]-aminopropionic acid)
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus** [p-menthane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] (do not use on children under 3 years of age)
 - Apply bug spray/repellent according to the instructions on the product label.

**MAP Reminder: A Health Care Provider order
is NOT needed for the use of bug spray.**

- **Mosquito Control in Homes:** Eliminate water that sits still around the home (standing water). This is water that collects in places like empty barrels, buckets, flowerpots, or birdbaths. Empty these items or dispose of them. Install or repair window screens and door seals to keep mosquitos out of the home.

If you or someone you support develops symptoms such as a very high fever (often 103-106 degrees), a stiff neck, headache, and extreme tiredness, seek medical care right away or get the person checked immediately.

For additional information please visit:

- [Mosquitoes](#)
- [Mosquito-Borne Diseases Prevention](#)
- [Mosquito Repellents](#)
- [Mosquito Surveillance](#)
- [Mosquito Control at Home](#)
- [Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\)](#)
- [Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment of EEE](#)
- [West Nile Virus \(WNV\)](#)
- [Interactive maps showing risk levels of EEE](#)