



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Fight the Bite: Take Precautions Against Mosquito-borne Illness

EEE/West Nile Virus Information Line Starts Today: 800-913-1139



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BURLINGTON – Mosquitoes can be more than a nuisance – not only do they take your blood and make you itch, they can also spread viral diseases such as West Nile virus and Eastern equine encephalitis.

As the coming warm weather brings out the insects, the Health Department encourages Vermonters to enjoy outdoor activities while taking simple precautions to avoid bites.

Human illness caused by mosquitoes is uncommon in the state, but in 2012, two people died from Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE), and three people were diagnosed with West Nile virus (WNV).

No Matter Where You Live – Enjoy the Outdoors, but Fight the Bite!

- Weather permitting, wear long sleeves and pants and avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn – when mosquitoes are most active.
- Reduce mosquito breeding habitats by getting rid of standing water. Drain areas where water can pool: rain gutters, wading pools and any other water-holding containers such as old tires.
- If you are outside when mosquitoes are biting, use an effective insect repellent. Choose repellents that have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number on the label. This indicates that the product has been evaluated for safety and effectiveness. Repellents that contain no more than 30 percent DEET are safe and effective for children and adults. When using insect repellent, always follow the directions on the label. EPA has an app that helps you search for a repellent that is right for you – Go to epa.gov and use the A-Z listing to go to 'Insect Repellents'.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Protect your animals. Horses are susceptible to WNV and EEE infection, and there are effective vaccines available. Llamas, alpacas and emus are also susceptible and can be immunized with the horse vaccine.
- Contact your health care provider if you have questions about your health or need medical attention.

Symptoms of WNV and EEE

Most people who are infected with WNV will not become ill, and this may be true for EEE as well. Those who become ill with either WNV or EEE will have flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, fatigue, joint and body aches. Symptoms typically last one or two weeks, and recovery can be complete. However, both viruses have the potential to invade the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and cause more serious illness. Symptoms of severe disease include fever, intense headache, weakness, poor coordination, irritability, drowsiness and mental status changes. About one-third of people who develop severe EEE disease will die, and many who recover are left with disabilities. Fortunately, severe EEE is rare.

EEE/WNV Information Line Starts June 20

The Health Department is offering a WNV/EEE information line to answer questions from the public. The phone line – 800-913-1139 – will be operational from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information on West Nile Virus and EEE and to find out the latest surveillance information, visit the Vermont Department of Health's website at healthvermont.gov.

For more information about mosquitoes, visit the [Vermont Agency of Agriculture website](#).

For health news, alerts and information visit healthvermont.gov

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