



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



West Nile Virus Detected in Southern Vermont

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



News Release: August 29, 2014

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BURLINGTON – Six batches of mosquitoes from Rockingham, Brattleboro, Putney and Newbury have recently tested positive for West Nile virus.

The mosquitoes from Newbury were collected on August 18. The five other batches were collected on August 21. Three of these were from the same site in Rockingham. Finding mosquitoes in Windham and Orange Counties is a reminder that West Nile virus is likely present in every part of the state.

Late summer is when the risk of human illness is highest. Although cool evenings help decrease mosquito activity, the risk for human illness persists until the first hard frost, usually sometime in October.

“We have not yet seen any cases this year in Vermont, but West Nile virus can cause serious illness in humans,” said Erica Berl, an epidemiologist for the Health Department. “That’s why we urge everyone to take precautions.”

To avoid mosquito bites:

1. Limit your time outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
2. Wear long sleeves and long pants when outdoors while mosquitoes are biting.
3. Use insect repellents that are labeled as effective against mosquitoes. Use repellents containing no more than 30 percent DEET for adults and children. Do not use DEET on infants younger than 2 months of age.
4. Get rid of standing water, and drain areas where water can pool: rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, etc.
5. Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.



Symptoms of West Nile virus are often mild, but can include high fever. Approximately 1 percent of people who are infected develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system, such as encephalitis or meningitis, which can be fatal.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets recommends that people who own animals that are susceptible to West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), including horses and camelids (llamas and alpacas), talk with their veterinarians about vaccinating their animals. West Nile virus and EEE can cause severe neurologic disease (incoordination, seizures and inability to stand) in horses and camelids, and can result in high mortality rates in those species. Emus are susceptible to EEE and can be vaccinated with the equine vaccine. Owners can help protect their animals from infection by using acceptable insect repellents and mechanical barriers such as fly sheets and face nets. Changing out water troughs regularly and removing other items that hold water will help to reduce mosquito breeding areas.

For more information visit healthvermont.gov, or call the West Nile Virus / EEE Information line 800-913-1139.

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