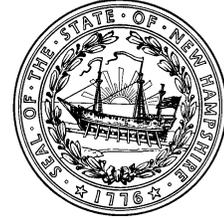


NH Department of Health and Human Services
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park
Concord, NH 03301



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2013

CONTACT
Public Information Office
603-271-9388
Twitter: NHDHHSPIO

Facebook: NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices

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 the 2012 season, 9 batches of mosquitoes tested positive for EEE and 41 batches tested positive for WNV. There were 4 veterinary cases of EEE (2 horses and 2 emus) but none detected for WNV. There was also a human case of WNV but no EEE cases.

During 2011, 9 batches of mosquitoes tested positive for WNV and no samples tested positive for EEE. In 2010, 1 animal and 1 person tested positive for WNV and 1 animal tested positive for EEE.

“These numbers illustrate the unpredictability of these viruses,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS. “The weather plays a role as do environmental factors so we just don’t know from year to year what will happen. Therefore, it is 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 a 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
- 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 Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 1-800-852-3345 x4496.

#