



Board of Health
TOWN OF NORFOLK, MA

September 25, 2006

RE: Detection of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus in South Walpole, MA

Dear Friends and Parents,

This letter is to notify you that Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus was confirmed in mosquitoes in South Walpole last Thursday.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced Thursday that the EEE virus has been detected in mosquitoes collected from Walpole, Massachusetts. A mosquito sample collected from Walpole on September 18, 2006 which tested positive for the EEE virus. The sample included *Culiseta melanura* mosquitoes in the Cedar Swamp area of South Walpole (near the Norfolk line).

Culiseta melanura is a mosquito species that is not typically attracted to mammals (does not bite humans or animals) and is commonly found in Cedar swamp areas. However, EEE is maintained in nature through a cycle between the *Culiseta Melanura* mosquito and birds that live in freshwater or cedar swamps. Although the *Culiseta Melanura* mosquito does not typically bite humans, some will "cross bite" – bite an infected bird and then bite a human or animal (horse, and other exotic birds) – thereby spreading the disease. These mosquitoes are also known as bridge vectors, a species that transmits a disease from one host to another. These bridge vectors may take a meal from a bird and later take another meal from a mammal.

EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by mosquitoes. While EEE can infect people of all ages, people under 15 years of age are at greatest risk for serious illness. The diagnosis of EEE this late in the season highlights the fact that the risk for human cases of EEE and West Nile Virus disease continues.

EEE symptoms usually occur within 2-10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. These symptoms include high fever, stiff neck, headache, confusion, and lethargy. Encephalitis, swelling of the brain, is the most dangerous symptom. If there are any indications of these symptoms please do not hesitate to see your physician immediately.

The Norfolk Board of Health and the MDPH recommends and encourages all residents not let their guard down. It is important that residents continue to take appropriate

precautions and actions to avoid mosquito bites and reduce mosquito populations around their home and neighborhoods. The Board of Health recommends taking the following actions immediately:

1. Limit your time outdoors during peak periods of mosquito activity (dusk and dawn) or if you must remain outdoors, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants.
2. Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET (the chemical N-N-diethyl-metathouamide) and follow the directions on the label. Products containing DEET should not be used on children less than 2 months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or lower for older children and adults. Higher concentrations of DEET may provide protection for a longer period of time, but do not provide a higher level of protection. If you are concerned about exposures to chemicals, use the lowest concentration of DEET which provides protection for the length of time you will be exposed to mosquitoes, and wash your skin when you return indoors.
3. Take special care to cover up the arms and legs of children playing outdoors. When you bring a baby outdoors, cover the baby's carriage or playpen with mosquito netting.
4. Fix any holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all your doors and windows.
5. Remove any standing water around your home that is available for mosquito breeding. Mosquitoes will begin to breed in any puddle or standing water that lasts for more than four days. Make sure water does not collect and stagnate in ceramic pots, trash cans, recycling containers, old tires, wading pools, bird baths, etc. Remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of roof gutters.

Information about EEE and reports of EEE activity in Massachusetts during 2006 can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph/wnv/wnv1.htm. In addition, attached are EEE Virus fact sheets. Do not hesitate to contact the Norfolk Board of Health office at (508) 528-7747 if you need additional information or have any questions about the EEE Virus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Lavin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

John W. Lavin, PE
Chairman
Norfolk Board of Health

Distribution: Jack Hathaway, Town Administrator / Selectman's Office
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attachments