

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)

Public Information Sheet

What is Eastern equine encephalitis?

Encephalitis means “inflammation of the brain.” Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is caused by a virus and is spread by mosquito bites. EEE causes disease in humans, horses, and some bird species. Due to the high mortality rate, EEE is regarded as one of the most serious mosquito borne diseases in the United States.

What are the symptoms of Eastern equine encephalitis?

Most people with EEE infection do not get sick. In those persons who do develop illness, symptoms range from mild flu-like illness to encephalitis, coma, and death. The mortality rate from EEE is approximately 33 percent, making it one of the most deadly mosquito borne diseases in the US.

Who is most at risk for Eastern equine encephalitis?

People working or playing outdoors are at a higher risk for infection. These include activities near woods, swamps in the Atlantic and Gulf Coast states, as well as the Great Lakes region. People over 50 and younger than 15 years of age are at the most risk severe EEE infection.

Is Eastern equine encephalitis a problem in West Virginia?

West Virginia has never reported human cases of EEE, but it has been found in birds in the state.

How is Eastern equine encephalitis spread?

EEE is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. EEE cannot be spread from one person to another.

How can I protect my family from Eastern equine encephalitis?

Remove standing water to get rid of mosquitoes:

- Get rid of old tires and trash around your home.
- Punch holes in the bottoms of trash barrels so they don't hold water.
- At least once or twice a week, clean and empty water from flower pots, bird baths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels and cans.
- Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out so they drain properly.
- Maintain swimming pools or drain them completely.

Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.

Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program

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Avoid outside activities when mosquitoes are active.

Use insect repellent on bare skin.

- DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535 are effective.
- Follow package directions carefully.
- Apply sparingly to children and wash them with soap and water when they come indoors. Avoid application to the hands and face of young children.

Make sure doors and screens are bug tight.

Contact your doctor if you feel ill

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