



Town of Canton, Massachusetts

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PRESS RELEASE



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September brings both good news and bad news to the Canton area with regard to the mosquito nuisance that residents have been experiencing. First the bad news: This month the mosquito populations seem to be extraordinarily heavier than at any time this past year, causing nuisance conditions at cookouts, pool parties, outdoor sports events and just about any other outdoor activity. At the same time, the Norfolk County Mosquito Control Program (NCMCP) continues to conduct its ULV (ultra low volume) pesticide aerosol ground spraying throughout Canton and the rest of the County using the mosquito adulticide, Anvil (EPA Reg.# 1021-1688-8329). Neighborhoods may experience the low drone of the ULV truck sprayers in the very early hours of the morning beginning around 2:00 AM and lasting until around 7:30 AM. NCMCP has extended its spraying calendar beyond Labor Day and will continue spraying for adult mosquitoes until September 30, 2005 due to the high numbers of mosquitoes. Although mosquitoes may cause uncomfortable conditions for individuals who spend their time outdoors, particularly in the early morning or evening, the main purpose of keeping the mosquito populations down is to reduce the chance of the spread of the arboviral diseases carried by mosquitoes, most notably Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV). Both of these diseases are carried by mosquitoes and can infect humans who are bitten by infected mosquitoes. Both EEE and WNV are often fatal, and affect mostly young children and the elderly, although anyone can become infected.

But there is the good news. As of this writing, there have been no cases of EEE or WNV detected in Canton. And the number of cases throughout the State have, so far, been similar to those of last year. Each summer during mosquito season, suspect dead birds are collected and tested at the State Laboratory at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) in Jamaica Plain. Also, sample pools of mosquito populations are trapped. Both birds and mosquitoes are tested to determine if either of the viruses are present in those populations. So far this year, Canton has been lucky. Neither Bird populations nor mosquito populations have been found to have either of these two diseases.

Residents should be warned, however, that the EEE and WNV season is not yet over. As long as there are mosquitoes still around, the danger of these two menaces will continue. Generally, one can expect mosquitoes to last up until the first frost of the year, which will kill all surviving adult mosquitoes.

In the meantime, there are a number of things people can do to protect themselves and their families. The following advice will help reduce people's chance of being bitten by mosquitoes and, thereby, reduce the danger of exposure to EEE and WNV.

- Limit 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.
- Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET (the chemical N-N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) and follow the directions on the label. Never use DEET on infants. Avoid using repellents with DEET concentrations above 10-15% for children and with concentrations above 30-35% for adults.
- Take special care to cover up the arms and legs of children playing outdoors. If you choose to bring a baby outdoors, cover the baby's carriage or playpen with mosquito netting.
- Fix any holes in household screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all your doors and windows.
- Remove any standing water around the home to reduce habitats 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, birds baths, etc. Remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of roof gutters.

Information about EEE and WNV and reports of EEE and WNV activity in Massachusetts during 2005 can be found on the MDPH website at <http://westnile.ashtonweb.com/index.asp> or the NCMCP website at <http://www.massnrc.org/ncmcp>. The Canton Board of Health will continue to work closely with the MDPH and the Norfolk Mosquito Control Program to improve awareness of and decrease the risk from WNV. If anyone has any questions about the mosquito control program they can contact the NCMCP at (781) 762-3681 or the Canton Board of Health at (781) 821-5021.

Submitted by:

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