

# Town of Canton, Massachusetts



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**September 7, 2006**

### **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Virus Confirmed in Mosquitoes from Canton**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus has been detected in mosquitoes collected from Canton, Massachusetts. A mosquito sample collected from Canton on 9/4/06 tested positive for EEE virus. The sample included *Culiseta melanura* mosquitoes. In 2005, forty-five EEE virus positive mosquito samples were identified in twenty-one Massachusetts towns in six counties.

EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by mosquitoes. This year, some areas of Massachusetts are experiencing significant levels of mosquito-borne disease. Several human cases, one of whom has died from the infection in Middleboro, have been identified as of this writing. Southeastern Massachusetts has had the highest number of mosquitoes test positive for the EEE virus. This is the first case of EEE having been found in Canton this year, however.

While EEE can infect people of all ages, people under 15 years of age or over 50 years of age are at greatest risk for serious illness. Many sports and recreational activities in which students are likely to participate occur during the evening and dusk hours, the time of the day when many kinds of mosquitoes are actively biting. Other mosquitoes feed during daylight hours. Active participation in outdoor sports increases our availability to mosquitoes. Physical exertion and sweating (an indicator of increased output of carbon dioxide, a mosquito attractant, from the body) may also change individual attractiveness to mosquitoes and may decrease the time that repellents are effective.

Although aerial spraying has been conducted twice in areas of Southeastern Massachusetts due to the number of human cases in that region and the high numbers of mosquito pools that have tested positive for EEE, no plans for aerial spraying have been made for Canton as of the date of this press release. This could change, however, based on further evaluations by the State. Watch your local news stations for up-to-the-minute notifications of any potential aerial spraying. The Canton Board of Health will also keep Canton residents informed. Meanwhile, the Norfolk County Mosquito Control Program continues to conduct ground spraying in affected areas.

The Canton Board of Health and the MDPH recommend that the public take action now to avoid mosquito bites and reduce mosquito populations around their home and neighborhoods.

- **Avoid Outdoor Activity During Peak Mosquito Hours.** The hours from dusk to dawn are peak mosquito biting times for many mosquitoes. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** When possible, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors during peak mosquito activity time.
- **Apply Mosquito Repellent when you go outdoors.** A wide variety of mosquito repellent products are available. The most effective repellents contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), Picaridin (KBR 3023) or Permethrin. Always follow the instructions on the product label. DEET and Picaridin products can be used directly on skin and on clothing. Permethrin products can be used on clothing but not directly on skin. Oil of lemon eucalyptus has also demonstrated efficacy against mosquito bites, with protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET. Products containing DEET should not be used on children less than 2 months of age. Products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children less than 3 years of age.
- **Fix any holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all your doors and windows.**
- **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, birds baths, etc. Remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of roof gutters.

Apply only as much repellent as needed. Choose a product that will provide sufficient protection for the amount of time that you will be spending outdoors. Saturation does not increase repellent efficacy. Product labels often indicate the length of time that you can expect protection from a product. Keep repellents away from eyes, nostrils and lips: do not inhale or ingest repellents or get them into the eyes. Avoid applying repellents to portions of children's hands that are likely to have contact with eyes or mouth. Never use repellents on wounds or irritated skin. Wash repellent-treated skin after coming indoors.

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](http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv/wnv1.htm). Canton Board of Health will continue to work closely with the MDPH Arbovirus Surveillance Program and the Norfolk Mosquito Control Program on mosquito control and surveillance efforts. Ground spraying using the pesticide Anvil, is continuing throughout the county by the Norfolk Mosquito Control Program.

Submitted,

John L. Ciccotelli, R.S., C.H.O., Director of Public Health  
Canton Board of Health

cc: Canton Board of Health