

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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Eastern Equine Encephalitis

What is Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)?

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare virus that can cause swelling of the brain. The disease is found in both horses and people. In a small percentage of people, the disease can be serious, even fatal.

How is Eastern Equine Encephalitis spread?

EEE is spread to humans and horses by the bite of an infected mosquito. An infected human or horse cannot spread the virus to others. The risk of getting EEE is highest from late Spring through early Fall.

Is Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Michigan?

Human cases of EEE are rare. The first human case of EEE in Michigan was identified in 1980, with sporadic human cases reported thereafter. Federal, state and local officials closely monitor the spread of this disease.

What is the treatment for EEE?

There is no specific treatment or medication for this infection in people. Horses can be vaccinated to prevent infection.

What are the symptoms of EEE?

Most people show no symptoms or have mild symptoms that include fever, headache, and body aches. More severe cases of the disease includes sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may progress to disorientation, seizures and coma.

Can EEE be prevented?

The best way to protect yourself is to prevent mosquitoes from biting you:

- Eliminate standing water that collects in birdbaths, boats, buckets, tires, unused pools, roof gutters and other containers.
- Use insect repellents. Insect repellents containing no more than 35% DEET works best. Follow Label directions carefully. Do not use repellents on children younger than two years of age. Repellants should be used sparingly on children 2 – 6 years of age containing only 10% DEET.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeved shirts and pants.
- Limit evening outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active.
- Avoid shaded areas where mosquitoes may be resting.
- Maintain window and door screening to keep mosquitoes out of buildings.

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For more information on Eastern Equine Encephalitis call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1-800-848-5533.

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