



TOWN OF NORTH READING BOARD OF HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

West Nile Virus Confirmed in Mosquitoes in North Reading

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced today that West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes collected from the Southwick Road area of the Town of North Reading.

Due to the population of mosquitos being low and the fact that no mosquitos have been detected as having Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in North Reading, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has deemed that the Town's "Risk" levels for WNV and EEE will remain "Low" at this time.

While the North Reading Health Department continues to work closely with the MDPH and East Middlesex Mosquito Control, locally the Health Department has conducted spraying, treated 1800 town catch basin in August 2019, provided education awareness on the Town of North Reading website and distributed fact sheets on WNV at the North Reading Health Department.

The Town of North Reading and the East Middlesex Mosquito Control will conduct additional ground spraying in the Southwick Road area next week. Please see the Health Department website for additional information – <https://www.northreadingma.gov/health-department> .

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that carry this virus are common throughout the state, and are found in urban as well as more rural areas. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe infection.

By taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and their loved ones:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent.
- Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

- Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- Drain Standing Water – Many mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- Install or Repair Screens - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Information about mosquito activity in Massachusetts during 2019 can be found on the Mosquito-borne Disease page on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases>.

Fact sheets on WNV, EEE and other mosquito-related materials are available by contacting the North Reading Health Department at 978-357-5242 or by accessing their website at <https://www.northreadingma.gov/health-department>