

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: October 1, 2019

END DATE: October 11, 2019

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Health Officer

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RE: **Update on Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Genesee County**

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) is providing this update in response to inquiries regarding the recent aerial spraying that is currently being conducted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) in counties affected by Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). A deer was discovered in Fenton Township that was reported as testing positive for EEE on September 9, 2019. Fenton Township has a robust season-long mosquito abatement program and was proactive in response to this single identified case of EEE. An additional targeted mosquito spraying was conducted within a two (2) mile radius of where the deer was found. The contracted mosquito abatement company took further action to set out three (3) mosquito traps in the targeted area. When the traps were full they sent the mosquitoes to the Michigan State University laboratory to test for West Nile Virus (WNV) and EEE. All test results were negative for both diseases. Due to Fenton Township's contracted mosquito abatement company's quick response to treat the targeted area, the MDHHS notified the GCHD on September 26th that it was holding off on offering aerial insecticide spraying in Genesee County at this time. The GCHD concurred with this decision.

If the risk changes substantially and there are additional animal cases or human cases of EEE identified in Genesee County, MDHHS would reconsider offering aerial spraying. If Genesee County is offered aerial insecticide spraying at a later date, residents will be notified via media release, social media, and by visiting our website at www.gchd.us. Residents wishing to opt out of having their property



sprayed must send an email request to MDHHS at eee@michigan.gov. Resident name and complete residential address must be included in the body of the email. Genesee County residents can opt out of having their property sprayed at any time now or in the future, but must do so at least 48 hours before spraying is scheduled to begin. Residents can find additional information about EEE at www.michigan.gov/EEE or by visiting our website at www.gchd.us and clicking on the EEE hot button on the home page.

The GCHD continues to stress the importance of taking precautions against mosquito bites, especially during outdoor activities occurring at or after dusk, particularly activities that involve children. Residents can stay healthy by following these steps to avoid mosquito bites, especially prior to outdoor activities:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Children under 2 months old should not use repellent but rather be covered in clothing that covers arms and legs; strollers and baby carriers should be covered with mosquito netting.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Also apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

People can be infected with EEE, California Group encephalitis viruses, and WNV from the bite of a mosquito carrying the viruses. Infections can occur even when mosquito bite numbers are low. The diseases can affect anyone, however persons younger than age 15 and over age 50 are at greatest risk of severe illness following infection.

Signs of EEE and WNV include the sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches. Symptoms of California encephalitis virus include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and lethargy. The diseases can develop into severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should visit a health care provider or emergency room.

Further information about mosquito-borne disease is available at [Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](https://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases) and on the Genesee County Health Department website at www.gchd.us.

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