



EHHD

Eastern Highlands Health District

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Date: June 22nd, 2016

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Eastern Highlands Health District Offers Tips for Mosquito Control and Prevention

The week of June 26th-July 1st, 2016 has been declared the twentieth annual “National Mosquito Control Awareness Week” by the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA). There is nothing worse than having an unwanted house guest in the form of a mosquito. The Eastern Highlands Health District would like to remind residents to take safety precautions this summer to prevent mosquito infestation and control any existing mosquito problems.

The Connecticut Mosquito Management Program explains that there are six types of viruses found in Connecticut that are known to cause disease. West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are two diseases of concern for Connecticut residents. WNV is carried by birds and can cause neurological damage which can be potentially fatal. The WNV season extends from July through early October but the greatest risk of human infection occurs from August through September. EEE is found in birds and bird biting mosquitoes that live near the wetland habitats along the eastern seaboard along the East Coast of the USA, including Connecticut. The highest risk of getting EEE is from late July through September.

Most of us are familiar with, some signs of a harmless mosquito bite, including a poufy, white and reddish bump that appears a few minutes after the bite. Bites that transmit disease have varying symptoms, ranging from no symptoms at all to symptoms being extreme and debilitating. For EEE infections, most people will not develop any symptoms. For those who do, symptoms appear 4-10 days after the bite of infected mosquito. Symptoms begin with sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may progress into disorientation, seizures, inflammation of the brain or coma. For WNV infection, 80% infected have no symptoms, 20% may experience mild illnesses and 1% particularly elderly or persons with compromised immune systems become severely ill. Onset of symptoms occurs 3-14 days. Symptoms include light fever, headache, body aches, rash, nausea and swollen lymph nodes to the rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, coma and, rarely, death.



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Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that has gained a lot of attention in the media lately. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes. There are currently no vaccines to prevent Zika virus. The only way to treat Zika virus is to treat the symptoms. The infected mosquito can spread the virus to other people. Zika is spread through mosquito bites and through sexual transmission. The CDC recommends that pregnant women avoid going to areas with ongoing Zika Virus. In April 2016, CDC scientists announced that Zika virus is the cause of microcephaly and other several fetal brain defects in unborn children. Please see the CDC's website (below) for a list of counties that pregnant women should avoid and recommendations for people returning to the USA from a country that has Zika Virus. See your doctor if you are pregnant and develop the above symptoms within 2 weeks after traveling to place has ongoing Zika virus.

The AMCA recommends practicing the “Three D’s” of mosquito prevention- Drain, Dress and Defend:

- **Drain:** Empty out water containers at least once per week
- **Dress:** Wear long sleeves, long pants, and light-colored, loose-fitting clothing when outside and in areas where there is the potential for mosquito bites
- **Defend:** Properly apply an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellent such as DEET, picardin, IR3535 or oil of lemon-eucalyptus

Director of Health at the Eastern Highlands Health District Robert Miller comments that “we encourage residents to get active outdoors and enjoy the abundance of summer activities that Connecticut has to offer. Taking simple steps to prevent and control mosquito problem, such as eliminating standing water, minimizes the risk of contracting a potentially infectious mosquito bite.”

For more information on mosquito-borne diseases such as the Zika virus and mosquito prevention please visit www.ct.gov/mosquito or www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention.