

Date: September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

RE: Health Alert for Van Buren and Cass County Residents

This year, Eastern Equine encephalitis virus (EEE) infected 2 Michigan residents (1 Kalamazoo and 1 Berrien). EEE has also infected animals including 7 horses (3 Kalamazoo, 2 St. Joseph, and 2 Barry) and 2 deer (Cass and Barry) and one suspect case in Cass County. The Van Buren Cass District Health Department received notification from the DNR that a deer in Cass County has tested positive for EEE the week of August 19, 2019.

Van Buren Cass District Health Department along with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is urging residents to stay healthy by following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screenings 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 from the bite of a mosquito carrying the virus. The disease is not spread from animal to humans. Signs and symptoms of EEE include sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches. EEE infection 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, per the press release from MDHHS, August 26, 2019. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, seek prompt medical attention.

Follow us on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/VBCDHD> and our website at [www.vbcassdhd.org](http://www.vbcassdhd.org). Please share this post about EEE to your agency's Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/2kknRPM>.





STATE OF MICHIGAN

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Aug. 26, 2019

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## **Cases of mosquito-borne disease suspected in Michigan residents** *Eastern Equine Encephalitis continues to be a threat in Southwest Michigan*

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan residents are being reminded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to protect themselves from mosquito bites following the confirmation of one case of a mosquito-borne disease in a resident and three other possible cases in the state.

Three cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) are now suspected in residents from Kalamazoo and Berrien counties. In addition, a case of California encephalitis virus has been confirmed in a Genesee County resident.

As of Aug. 26, six cases of EEE have been confirmed in horses in Barry, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph counties. None of the horses were vaccinated against EEE and all animals have died. There is an EEE vaccine available for horses, but not for people. In addition, two deer in Barry and Cass counties have been diagnosed with EEE.

“Mosquito-borne diseases can cause long-term health effects in people and even death,” said Dr. Mary Grace Stobierski, MDHHS state public health veterinarian and manager of the Zoonotic and Emerging Infectious Diseases Section. “These cases, along with confirmed cases in horses and deer in the state, stress the importance of taking precautions against mosquito bites.”

EEE is one of the most dangerous mosquito-borne diseases in the United States, with a 33 percent fatality rate in people who become ill and a 90 percent fatality rate in horses that become ill. People can be infected with EEE or California group encephalitis viruses from the bite of a mosquito carrying the viruses.

Residents can stay healthy by following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer’s directions for use.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.

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- 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.

Signs of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches. Symptoms of California encephalitis virus include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and lethargy.

Both 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.

Additionally, West Nile Virus activity in Michigan has increased in wildlife and mosquito populations. Health officials have identified 18 positive mosquito pools and eight infected birds in the Lower Peninsula. No human cases of West Nile Virus have been reported. Mosquito-borne illness will continue to be a risk in Michigan until late fall when nighttime temperatures consistently fall below freezing.

For more information about mosquito-borne diseases, visit [Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](https://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases).

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