



Why is it important to prevent mosquito bites?

Mosquitoes can spread diseases that make you sick. In Massachusetts, mosquitoes can give you eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus and West Nile virus (WNV).

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease. Symptoms include high fever, stiff neck, headache, and lack of energy. Swelling of the brain, called encephalitis, is the most dangerous complication, and can cause coma and death. Most cases in Massachusetts occur in the southeastern part of the state but recently, there has been an increase in cases occurring in other parts of the state.

West Nile virus infections are more common than EEE, but most WNV infections do not cause any symptoms. Mild WNV infections can cause fever, headache and body aches, often with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. A small number of people (less than 1 out of 100) who get infected with West Nile virus develop more serious illness; this is more common in people over the age of 50. Symptoms of serious illness can include headache, high fever, stiff neck, confusion, muscle weakness, tremors (shaking), convulsions, coma, paralysis, swelling of the brain, and sometimes death.

See your doctor if you develop these symptoms.

What can I do to protect my animals?

Mosquitoes can infect horses and other animals. Horses are susceptible to WNV; and horses, llamas, alpacas, emus, ostriches and certain exotic game birds can get EEE. WNV and EEE viruses are not spread from horses or other mammals to humans in any way.

- Vaccines licensed for horses are considered highly protective and can even be used in some other species. Talk to your veterinarian about vaccinating your animals.
- Eliminate standing water by getting rid of items that can collect and hold water such as flower pots, tires and containers. Cleaning animal water buckets and troughs at least twice weekly will reduce mosquito breeding habitats.
- Consider screening stalls if possible or install fans to help deter mosquitoes.
- Keep animals indoors during peak periods of mosquito activity (dusk and dawn).
- Avoid turning on lights inside barns during the evening and overnight because mosquitoes are attracted to light.
- Apply mosquito repellents approved for use in animals. Read the product label before using, and follow all instructions carefully.

Only a small number of mosquitoes are infected at any given time, so being bitten by a mosquito does not mean you will get sick. However, the best way to avoid both of these illnesses is to prevent mosquito bites.

What is the best way to prevent mosquito bites?

- Use mosquito repellent any time you are outdoors. Even being out a short time can be long enough to get a mosquito bite. Make sure to follow directions on the label.
- Be aware of mosquitoes around you. If mosquitoes are biting you, reapply repellent, or think about going inside.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many species of mosquitoes. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning — or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.
- Use mosquito netting on baby carriages or playpens when your baby is outdoors.
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors.
- Make sure screens are repaired and are tightly attached to doors and windows.
- Remove standing water from places like ditches, gutters, old tires, wheel barrows, and wading pools. Mosquitoes can begin to grow in any puddle or standing water that lasts for more than four days, so don't let water collect around your home.
- Avoid camping overnight near freshwater swamps to reduce your risk of exposure to mosquitoes that carry the EEE virus. If you do go camping, use a tent with mosquito netting and use appropriate repellents.

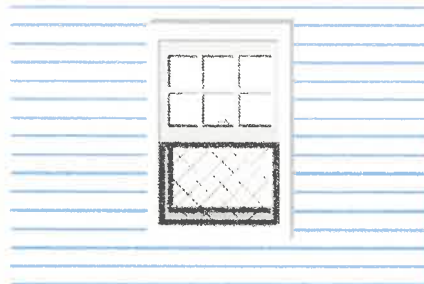
Use an EPA-approved repellent anytime you're outdoors.



Wear long pants, long sleeves and socks to reduce exposed skin outdoors.



Repair torn screens early in the season to keep mosquitoes outdoors.



Remove standing water around the house to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.



Dusk to dawn is peak biting time for mosquitoes that carry disease.

