



## Salem/Cumberland County Health Department Eastern Equine Encephalitis Fact Sheet (EEE)

### What is EEE?

- Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease.
- As the name suggests, EEE occurs in the eastern half of the US.
- Because of the high case fatality rate, it is regarded as one of the more serious mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.

### Can humans get EEE?

- Yes, EEE virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Mainly EEE is spread between birds and mosquitoes.
- Yes, the disease is more common in young children and in persons over the age of 55.
- In addition to humans, other animals that can suffer severe disease include: horses, certain birds such as pheasants, quail, ostriches and emus and, rarely, puppies.
- The risk of becoming infected with EEE virus, while extremely low at all times, is highest from late July through early October.

### What are the signs and symptoms of EEE?

- Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms; others get only a mild flu-like illness with fever, headache, and a sore throat.



## Salem/Cumberland County Health Department Eastern Equine Encephalitis Fact Sheet (EEE)

- In rare cases, infection of the central nervous system occurs, causing sudden fever, muscle pains and a headache of increasing severity, often followed quickly by seizures and coma.

### How soon do symptoms occur?

- Symptoms usually occur 4 to 10 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Eastern equine encephalitis is diagnosed through tests of the blood or spinal fluid.

### What is the treatment for EEE?

- There is no specific treatment for Eastern equine encephalitis. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses, and anti-viral drugs have not been effective for treating EEE. Care of the patient centers on treatment of symptoms and complications.

### Can you get EEE from horses or other people?

- Only mosquitoes can transmit the EEE virus to humans. People and horses that are infected with the virus cannot spread the disease to others.

### Can EEE be prevented?

- There is an effective Eastern equine encephalitis vaccine for horses and birds, but there is no licensed EEE vaccine for people.



## Salem/Cumberland County Health Department Eastern Equine Encephalitis Fact Sheet (EEE)

- You can avoid mosquito bites and reduce your risk in the following ways:
  - Apply insect repellent containing up to 30% DEET to exposed skin or clothing when you go outdoors. Do not apply to children under 3 years old, and do not apply to hands or face of children. **Carefully follow all label directions.**
  - When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when outdoors. Clothes may be sprayed with a repellent containing DEET.
  - Repair or install new screens on doors and windows to keep out mosquitoes.
  - Eliminate all potential mosquito breeding sites around the home. This includes cleaning out gutters and drains, disposing of old tires, draining standing water from pool covers and ditches, removing all containers which hold water, properly maintaining pools and changing birdbath water every several days.

### Where can I get more information about EEE?

The following web sites are a source of additional information:

- New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services ([www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health)),
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ([www.state.nj.us/dep/mosquito](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/mosquito)),
- New Jersey Mosquito Homepage ([www.njmosquito.org](http://www.njmosquito.org)),
- New Jersey Department of Agriculture ([www.state.nj.us/agriculture](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture)),
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).