



## **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)** (PUBLIC HANDOUT)

### **What is EEE?**

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease. EEE virus occurs in the eastern half of the United States where it causes disease in humans, horses, and some bird species. Because of the high mortality rate, EEE is regarded as one of the most serious mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.

### **Who gets EEE?**

Anyone can get EEE, but 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: equines (horses), certain birds such as pheasants, quail, ostriches and emus and, rarely, puppies.

### **How is EEE spread?**

- EEE is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. It generally takes from 3 to 10 days to develop symptoms of EEE after being bitten by an infected mosquito.
- The main EEE transmission cycle is between birds and mosquitoes.

### **What are the symptoms of EEE?**

Infection with EEE can cause a range of illnesses. Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms; others get only a mild flu-like illness with fever, headache, and a sore throat. 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. In these rare cases, about one third of patients die from the disease. Of those who survive, many suffer permanent brain damage.

### **What is the treatment for EEE?**

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



## **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)**

(PUBLIC HANDOUT)

### **How can EEE be prevented?**

- 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 permethrin or DEET, but don't apply permethrin to the skin and don't apply DEET to the skin under clothing. Remember that the salt marsh mosquito is a persistent biter at any time of day.
- 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.
- For further information about mosquito surveillance and control in the community, contact your county mosquito control agency. As the pesticide applicator, the county agency can answer questions about any insecticide applications which are necessary for mosquito control in the community.

### **Where can I get more information on EEE?**

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services (NJDHSS)

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/f\\_eee.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/f_eee.htm)

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/mosquito>

New Jersey Mosquito Homepage

<http://www.njmosquito.org>

New Jersey Department of Agriculture

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/eeefact.htm>