



## Residents urged to protect themselves from mosquito bites

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### For Immediate Release



**NEWS RELEASE**  
OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE DAVID COULTER  
Leigh-Anne Stafford, Health Officer

## Residents urged to protect themselves from mosquito bites

Pontiac, Mich., Sept. 18, 2019 – Oakland County Health Division and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) are reminding residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites as seven cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) were recently confirmed in Southwest Michigan. Three of the cases were fatal. No cases of EEE have been reported in Oakland County; however, five mosquito pools and a blood donor have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). Mosquito-borne diseases, such as EEE and WNV are seasonal and flare up in the warm summer months and continue into the fall.

“Protect yourself from mosquito bites until the first hard frost of the year,” said Leigh-Anne Stafford, health officer for Oakland County. “Whether you are at home or an outdoor event, there are simple steps that residents can take to reduce their risk of disease.”

Follow these prevention tips:

**Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent.** All EPA-registered insect repellents are evaluated for safety and effectiveness, and will contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol as the active ingredient. Repellents containing a higher percentage of the active ingredient typically

provide longer-lasting protection. Always follow the product label instructions.

- Be careful using repellent on the hands of children as it may irritate the eyes and mouth.

**Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.**

**Limit outdoor activity from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.**

**Maintain window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Do not prop open doors.**

**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.**

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. People can be infected with EEE from the bite of a mosquito carrying the viruses. Persons younger than age 15 and over age 50 are at greatest risk of severe disease following infection. Signs of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches which can progress to a severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases.

Anyone experiencing these symptoms should visit their physician's office. West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus. Mosquitoes are infected with the virus by biting an infected bird. The virus is then spread to humans through the bite of the infected mosquito. Most people who are infected with the virus have either no symptoms or experience a mild illness such as fever, headache, and body aches. However, in some individuals, a more serious disease-causing inflammation and swelling of the brain can develop. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious and potentially life-threatening symptoms of West Nile Virus if they do get sick.

For more information about Eastern Equine Encephalitis or West Nile Virus, visit [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health) or call Nurse on Call at 800-848- 5533, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For up-to-date public health information, follow @publichealthOC on Facebook and Twitter.

For media inquiries only, please contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County media & communications officer, at (248) 858-1048.

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NURSE ON CALL PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION HOTLINE

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