

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) - Fact Sheet

What is eastern equine encephalitis

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus.

Where is the virus found?

This virus grows in birds that live in fresh water swamps and is generally found only in these birds and in mosquitoes that usually do not bite people. Sometimes the virus gets picked up by other types of mosquitoes that bite other birds, animals, and people.

How is this virus spread?

It is spread by the bite of an infected adult mosquito. The virus is not spread directly from person-to-person.

Who gets EEE?

Anyone can get EEE if bitten by an infected mosquito but most mosquitoes in Connecticut do not carry EEE. The greatest risk for being bitten by an infected mosquito is from late July to mid October during activities near fresh water swamps.

What are the symptoms of EEE?

Early symptoms include high fever (103° - 106°F), stiff neck, severe headache, and lack of energy. The disease worsens quickly, and some patients go into a coma within a week. Encephalitis (swelling of the brain) is the most dangerous symptom.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms can appear anywhere from 3 to 10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

What is the treatment for EEE?

There is no cure for EEE. Three of every ten people who get the disease will die from it.

How can EEE be prevented?

The only way to protect yourself is to keep mosquitoes from biting you.

- If you are outdoors at dawn or dusk when mosquitoes are most active, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Consider using insect repellent, according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Fix any holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all doors and windows.
- Do not let stagnant water collect around your home. Mosquitoes can breed in water that collects in ditches, clogged gutters, old tires, wheelbarrows, or wading pools.
- Do not camp overnight near freshwater swamps.
- Use mosquito netting on tents.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only. It should not be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you think that you may have this infection, or have questions about the disease described above, you should consult your health care provider. For additional information on this disease, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <https://www.cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis/index.html>

To contact the Epidemiology and Emerging Infections Program, please call 860-509-7994.