



## EEE FOUND IN NEWAYGO COUNTY HORSE

September 26, 2019 --- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Bureau of Laboratories and the Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory has recently identified Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in Newaygo County. This is the first case of EEE in a horse in Newaygo County for over 10 years and the second since 1942. To date, no case of human EEE has been found in Newaygo County since this disease was first tracked in humans in 1980. To date this year, no human cases have been reported in Newaygo County or any county within District Health Department #10's (DHD#10) ten-county jurisdiction. Eight cases of EEE have been confirmed in residents of Barry, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren counties, including three deaths. As of today, 27 animals have been diagnosed with EEE in 13 counties.

At this time, it is felt that the risk of EEE in humans in Newaygo County is low. DHD#10 does not believe it is necessary to reschedule or change outdoor events. However, if you wish to act out of an abundance of caution, consider postponing, rescheduling or cancelling outdoor activities *occurring at or after dusk*, particularly activities that involve children. This would include events such as late evening sports practices or games or outdoor music practices until the first hard frost of the year.

The State of Michigan is considering the possibility of aerial spraying parts of Michigan where EEE is present, including portions of Newaygo County, to kill mosquitoes carrying the virus that causes EEE. The chemical that will be used is called Merus 3.0. It is an organic pesticide containing 5% pyrethrin. Pyrethrins are chemicals found naturally in some chrysanthemum flowers. The amount of chemical that will be used is so small that there is no risk to people, farm animals or pets. Merus 3.0 is used regularly in other parts of the country to prevent EEE with no negative impacts. Residents inside the spray area will not notice anything—there will be no residue or odor of any kind. The State is currently working on this plan but has not set a start date. **If the State moves forward with this plan, every effort will be made to notify those in the spray area.** DHD#10 will inform residents of the start date, time of day the spraying will occur, and all other details as soon as additional information is provided by the State.

EEE is a very rare, but serious disease caused by a virus. The virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite infected birds. Mosquitoes spread the virus to humans or other mammals, like horses or deer. EEE is only spread by mosquitoes; it cannot be spread to you by other humans or animals.

EEE is very rare. Even if bitten by a mosquito that carries EEE, people have only a 4-5% chance of developing the disease. Symptoms usually occur within 4-10 days after the infected mosquito bite. Symptoms can be severe, including sudden onset of high fever,



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### COUNTIES SERVED:

Crawford  
Kalkaska  
Lake  
Manistee  
Mason  
Mecosta  
Missaukee  
Newaygo  
Oceana  
Wexford



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headache, stiff neck, and can cause swelling of the brain, leading to seizures, coma, or death.

Not all mosquitoes can carry the EEE virus. The mosquitoes that can carry the EEE virus are most often found in and around hardwood forests or freshwater swamps/bogs, usually at night between dusk and dawn.

Individuals who are over the age of 50, under the age of 15, or have compromised immune systems due to underlying medical conditions or treatments are at elevated risk for contracting the virus.

Avoid mosquito bites by doing the following:

- Use an EPA-approved insect repellent containing an active ingredient like DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin and/or clothing. Always follow the directions on the package.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors as the weather permits.
- Consider limiting time outdoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Maintain window and door screening to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets, children's toys, or other containers around your home.

For more information, go to [www.michigan.gov/eee](http://www.michigan.gov/eee) and [www.cdc.gov/eee](http://www.cdc.gov/eee).

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