

# Massachusetts health officials announce season's first EEE-positive mosquito samples

"The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus has been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The presence of EEE was confirmed today by the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in mosquito samples collected on August 30 in Douglas and Southbridge in Worcester County. No human or animal cases of EEE have been detected so far this year.

Today's finding increases the risk level of EEE to moderate in the communities of Douglas, Dudley, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Uxbridge, and Webster in Worcester County.

"After the EEE outbreak cycle that occurred in 2019 and 2020, there was no EEE activity in Massachusetts in 2021 or 2022," said Public Health Commissioner Robert Goldstein, MD, PhD. "This is a late season emergence for EEE which should keep the risk level from rising too much or too quickly. However, some risk from mosquito-borne disease will continue until the first hard frost and people should take steps to prevent mosquito bites."

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE is generally spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. There were 12 human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2019 with six deaths and five human cases with one death in 2020. There were no human cases of EEE in Massachusetts in 2021 or 2022.

"Transmission of EEE to a person late in the season can

happen,” said Dr. Catherine M. Brown, State Epidemiologist. “Mosquitoes will be more active during warm and humid weather as we are forecast to have this weekend. I encourage everyone to use mosquito repellent when they are outdoors enjoying the last unofficial weekend of summer; you can also use clothing to cover exposed skin and if you notice that you are getting bitten, you should consider moving indoors.”