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THE NORTH COUNTRY HEALTH EFFECT

A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.



Mosquitoes

More than 200 types of mosquitoes live in the United States and about 12 types spread germs that can make people sick. Other mosquitoes bother people and are considered nuisance mosquitoes. In general, nuisance mosquitoes do not spread germs. Because you can't tell which mosquito could be spreading germs when it bites, it is important to protect yourself from mosquito bites. **Prevention is your best defense!**

Mosquito-borne illnesses

There is more to worry about with mosquitoes than just an itchy bite—mosquitoes can spread diseases that can make you very sick. While mosquitoes can spread many different diseases, **West Nile Virus (WNV)** and **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)** are two of the diseases that can be found in our region.

Most people infected with WNV or EEE will show no symptoms or only have a mild illness, but some people will get very sick. There are no human vaccines, specific treatments or medicines for these diseases, but you **CAN** protect yourself from mosquitoes. When used as directed, insect repellents are the **BEST** protection. See page 3 for more on using insect repellent safely.



How serious are WNV & EEE?

About 1 in 150 people with WNV will develop severe illness. Most people recover completely from even severe WNV.

EEE is very rare but serious. About 1 in 3 people who develop symptoms of EEE will die of the illness, and of those who survive, many have mild to severe brain damage.

West Nile Virus (WNV)

Symptoms may appear 3-14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.

Mild symptoms: fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting. Sometimes, swollen lymph nodes or a skin rash on the chest, stomach or back are seen.

Severe symptoms: high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop symptoms of severe WNV.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)

Symptoms may appear 4-10 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.

Severe cases begin with headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may progress into disorientation, seizures or coma. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop symptoms of severe EEE.

Each year, the North Country region sees cases of EEE in horses. EEE vaccination is very effective at preventing clinical disease in horses. Vaccination needs to be repeated at minimum on an annual basis; consult with your veterinarian regarding boosters.

Using insect repellent safely

Prevent bites from mosquitoes to lower your chances of getting sick from mosquito-borne diseases. **When used as directed, insect repellents are the BEST protection.**



- Always follow the product label instructions.
- Reapply insect repellent as directed, usually every few hours depending on which product/strength you choose.
- Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
- **Apply sunscreen first** and insect repellent second.
- Store out of the reach of children. Do not allow children to apply repellents themselves.
- Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
- When applying repellents to children, apply to your own hands and then put it on the child. Avoid the child's hands, as repellent may end up in their eyes or mouth.

The effectiveness of non-EPA-registered insect repellents, including some natural repellents, is not known. EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Use the EPA's helpful search tool to find the product that best suits your needs at www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you or by scanning the QR code.



Reduce mosquitoes around your home

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in or near water, and their offspring “grow up” in water before emerging as adults that fly and bite. This process usually takes about a week. By checking for and eliminating standing water weekly, you can control the number of mosquitoes in and around your home.

- **Empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water**, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers.
- **Make sure roof gutters drain properly**, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- **Tightly cover water storage containers** (including buckets, cisterns, and rain barrels). For containers without lids, use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.
- **Repair cracks or gaps in your septic tank.** Cover open vent(s) or plumbing pipes. Use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.
- **Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers** that are kept outdoors.
- **Install or repair screens on windows and doors** to keep mosquitoes out of your home. Use air conditioning when available.



For more health & safety tips, visit www.clintonhealth.org/nchealtheffect or scan the QR code.



Information in this guide was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, www.cdc.gov); the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH, www.health.ny.gov): and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, www.epa.gov).