



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: September 23, 2024

SARATOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REMINDS RESIDENTS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES AFTER EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS CONFIRMED SARATOGA COUNTY HORSE

BALLSTON SPA, NY - The Saratoga County Department of Health is advising residents to take personal protective measures to avoid mosquito bites, after New York State Department of Health confirmed the presence of Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus (EEEV) in a horse in the Town of Ballston.

The horse was not vaccinated against EEEV. It became ill on September 16 and was euthanized the same day. Specimens were collected at the time and tested positive for EEEV by Cornell University's Animal Health Diagnostic Center.

EEEV is transmitted from mosquito bites and there is no risk of infected horses spreading the virus to humans or to other horses. There are currently no confirmed or suspected human cases of EEEV among Saratoga County residents.

While risk to the public is low at this time, Saratoga County Department of Health is reminding residents to prevent mosquito bites by taking the following precautions:

- Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient and apply according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30 percent or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. More information on repellents can be found on the [EPA website](#).
- Wear long sleeves, tuck shirts into pants, and tuck pants into socks when outdoors.
- Use tightly fitting screens in all windows and doors of the home. Make sure the screens are free of rips, tears, and holes.
- Eliminate all standing water in yards and around the home and property where mosquitoes can breed, including plastic containers, pool covers, wading pools, ceramic pots, clogged drainpipes, water troughs, used tires, and wheelbarrows.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

(more)

Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus (EEEv) is an extremely rare but serious viral disease that can be fatal and is spread by infected mosquitoes that can affect people and horses. Anyone can be infected with EEEv, but those 50 years and older and those younger than 15 are at greatest risk for developing severe disease when infected with the virus. While most people bitten by an infected mosquito will not develop any symptoms, severe cases may begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills, and vomiting. The illness may then progress into disorientation, seizures, encephalitis, and coma. Approximately one- third of patients who develop EEEv die, while many patients who survive EEEv experience neurologic impairment. EEEv is not spread person-to-person, person to animal, or animal to person.

There is no commercially available human vaccine for EEEv and the best protection is to prevent mosquito bites.

Horse owners should have horses stay in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use on animals and make sure their animals are up to date on vaccinations for EEEv and other mosquito-borne diseases.

More information on Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus can be found on the [New York State Department of Health website](#).

###