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Cayuga County Residents Are Urged To “Fight The Bite” As Mosquito-Borne Illnesses Are On The Rise

The Cayuga County Health Department was notified on Thursday, August 15, 2024, by the New York State Department of Health that a horse in Cato has died as a result of eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEEV). Mosquito pools in several Central New York (CNY) counties have tested positive for EEEV and West Nile Virus (WNV), including Onondaga and Oswego counties. Additional equine cases of EEEV and West Nile virus (WNV) have been identified in several counties in CNY*. There have been no other reports of animal or human cases in Cayuga County due to mosquito-borne illnesses this year.

While EEEV, WNV, and other mosquito-borne diseases are generally found throughout New York State each summer, detection rates have significantly trended upwards from previous years*. The increase in positive pools and equine cases emphasizes the importance of residents taking measures to minimize the likelihood of being bitten by mosquitoes.

EEEV and WNV are primarily transmitted by mosquitos and can infect people, horses, and other animals. These diseases are rare, but serious, and can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). People at the greatest risk of developing severe disease are those over 50 years of age and younger than 15 years of age. **Therefore, the Health Department is reminding the public to continue to be vigilant and use personal protection measures to minimize being bitten by mosquitoes.**

Take the following precautions to prevent mosquito bites and mosquito-borne disease:

- Mosquitoes are most active from dusk to dawn.
- Avoid spending time outdoors when mosquitoes are most active (dusk to dawn). If you are going to be outside during active mosquito times:
 - Use an EPA certified mosquito repellent containing 20-30% DEET or picaridin. Follow the label directions. Repellent should not be used on babies younger than 2 months old.
 - Cover your skin as completely as possible when outside when mosquitoes are present and active. Wear closed toe shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Make sure screens in your windows and doors are tight-fitting, free of tears, rips, and holes.



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Many types of mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Reduce mosquito breeding around your home by eliminating standing water on your property.

- Clean clogged rain gutters.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and wading pools when not in use.
- Change water in bird baths every four days.
- Properly maintain swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate low spots where standing water accumulates.
- Remove unused tires from your property.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.

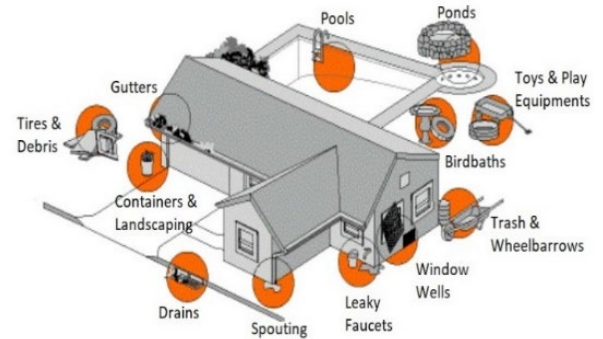


Photo source: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2747/>

If you cannot eliminate standing water around your you may want to consider treating the water with mosquito dunks. Mosquito dunks contain bacteria that kill mosquito larvae. They do not kill adult mosquitoes. Mosquito dunks can be purchased at your local hardware store.

If you own a horse:

- Consult your veterinarian to discuss preventative methods.
- EEEV vaccination is effective at preventing clinical disease in horses. Consult your veterinarian about your horse's vaccination status.

For more information on:

- Mosquito-borne illness, visit the Cayuga County Health Department website at <https://www.cayugacounty.us/797/Mosquito-Borne-Illness>.
- *New York State Department of Health Statewide Mosquito-borne Disease Activity Reports, visit: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/west_nile_virus/archived_reports/.
- Equine diseases and alerts, visit the Equine Disease Communication Center resources at <https://equinediseasecc.org/>.