



## Travel Guard® Health Advisory

### Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Several counties across Michigan have recently been at high risk for the dangerous mosquito-borne virus Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). As of September 19, 2019, the virus is continuing to spread in Michigan and now includes 12 counties as ongoing warm weather has allowed the mosquito presence to thrive. Three people have died from the disease, and the virus has been identified in 25 animals.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the following counties have confirmed human or animal cases of EEE: Barry, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Genesee, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lapeer, Montcalm, Newyago, St. Joseph, and Van Buren.

The CDC advises that people in affected counties should avoid mosquito bites until the first hard frost.

### What Is Eastern Equine Encephalitis?

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is an extremely rare, but serious and often fatal infection that causes encephalitis or inflammation of the brain. It is spread by the bite of a mosquito infected with EEE virus (EEEV). EEEV can also infect a wide range of animals including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. The spread of EEEV to mammals (including humans and horses) occurs through the bite of infected mosquitoes that feed on both birds and mammals.

### Symptoms

It is possible that some people who are infected with EEEV will not develop any symptoms. Symptoms of EEEV infection typically appear 4-10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

The type of symptoms usually depends on the age of the person. People over age 50 and younger than age 15 are at greatest risk for developing severe disease. Severe cases of EEE infection begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting that may progress into disorientation, seizures, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and coma. Approximately one-third of patients who develop EEE die, and many of those who survive have mild to severe brain damage.

### How Is Eastern Equine Diagnosed?

Health care providers diagnose EEE based on the patient's clinical symptoms and laboratory diagnosis by testing blood or spinal fluids, which will show if the virus or antibodies against the virus are present in the person.

### How Is Eastern Equine Treated?

There is no treatment for EEE, except to offer support to help a severely ill patient with breathing, hydration and nutrition.

### Recommendations

As with other mosquito-borne illnesses, the only way to protect yourself from the virus is to avoid being bitten by mosquitos that carry EEE. Please see recommendations regarding protecting yourself from mosquito bites below:

- Because mosquitoes are most active between dusk and dawn, people in the affected counties that are at risk should consider canceling, postponing or rescheduling outdoor events that occur at or after dusk, especially those that involve children.



- Consider using mosquito repellents when it is necessary to be outdoors and always use them according to label instructions. The most effective repellents contain DEET or Picaridin. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is also effective for brief periods of exposure.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair.
- While outdoors, wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing material should be tightly woven.
- Use mosquito netting if sleeping outdoors.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.
- Dispose of water-holding containers, such as ceramic pots, used tires, tire swings and clogged gutters around the house to avoid the presence of mosquitos.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, and cover pools when not in use.

To reduce the mosquito population around your home and property, reduce or remove all standing water:

- Centers for Disease and Control Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis/index.html>

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