



Monthly Spotlight

Date: September 2009

“Health officials remind residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.”

This fall there will be an increase in urban mosquitoes trying to enter buildings as their normal bird hosts fly south for the winter. Facility managers, students, staff and faculty should be aware that prevention by repair of screens and other exclusion measures will minimize the probability of any unnecessary mosquito bites.

There have been 10 human cases of WNV in Massachusetts during the last five years. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. There was one human case of EEE during 2008; however there were 13 cases leading to six deaths from 2004 through 2006. EEE is a serious disease for people of all ages and can cause death. Both WNV and EEE are spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

- **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.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors.** Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 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% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.
- **Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

More information is available on the DPH website: www.mass.gov/dph/wnv. Information about West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis is also available by calling the DPH recorded information line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7968), or the Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.