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## MOSQUITO ADVISORY FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

*State officials confirm an Eastern Equine Encephalitis detection in a Block Island mosquito sample; urge all Rhode Islanders to take personal precautions against insect-borne diseases before heading outdoors – especially hunters gearing up for deer season.*

PROVIDENCE – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) today confirmed that the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus has been detected in a mosquito pool, or sample, trapped on Block Island on September 9. In the latest round of trapping, RIDOH's State Health Laboratories tested 55 pools from 31 traps set September 9, finding all samples except the Block Island sample negative for both EEE and West Nile Virus (WNV).

EEE is a rare but serious illness that spreads when people are bitten by infected mosquitoes. RIDOH announced September 9 that the individual who had contracted EEE this year passed away on September 8. This was Rhode Island's first human case of EEE this year and first fatal case since 2007. Since September 6, DEM has announced that EEE has been detected in two deer, one from Coventry and the other from Richmond. Also, a EEE horse case originated in Westerly. Statewide to date, EEE has been detected in six mosquito pools – two in Central Falls, three in Westerly, and one on Block Island – and WNV has been detected in mosquito samples in Tiverton and Westerly.

DEM and RIDOH are urging all Rhode Islanders to take personal precautions against EEE and WNV. [Click here for information.](#)

With whitetail deer hunting season set to open on Sunday, September 15, DEM and RIDOH are especially urging novice and seasoned hunters alike to take mosquito and tick prevention measures. People who spend time near marshes, swamps, and other wetland habitats have increased exposure to mosquitoes, some of which can transmit EEE and WNV. People who spend time in heavily wooded areas or brushy areas with high grass have more exposure to ticks, which can transmit Lyme Disease and other illnesses.

EEE is not considered to be a threat to the state's deer populations. Deer, like horses, cannot transmit EEE to humans. The transmission of EEE to deer reinforces that 2019 is a higher-than-average risk year for mosquito-borne disease. EEE will continue to be a risk to deer, horses, and humans until after the first hard

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frost (occurring in mid to late-October), but infected deer may incubate the virus for about two weeks after exposure.

Tick-borne diseases are transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. These include [Lyme disease](#), [Anaplasmosis](#), [Ehrlichiosis](#), [Babesiosis](#), [Powassan](#) (POW), and [Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever](#). Ticks feed on small wild rodents, deer, pets, and humans. When a tick becomes infected and continues to feed on various hosts, the bacteria, virus, or parasite can be transmitted. Ticks that are in the brush and on tall grasses come into contact with humans as we pass through these environments. The ticks can then crawl up sleeves and bite the skin, typically around warm areas under the hair. Hunters are advised to repel, check for, and remove ticks. (Specific guidance is below.)

“Rhode Island’s diverse natural habitats abound in hunting opportunities, and we encourage sportsmen and sportswomen to get outdoors there and enjoy the experience that hunting brings,” said DEM Director Janet Coit. “At the same time, we want hunters to take the right precautions to protect themselves from the risk of insect-borne diseases this fall.”

DEM is urging hunters to protect themselves by applying bug spray to repel mosquitoes and ticks before going out into the field on Sunday and in the weeks ahead. DEM also is urging hunters to continue using the same essential, common-sense precautions that they ordinarily use when field dressing animals they’ve harvested. Deer hunting seasons vary by zone and by archery, muzzleloader, and shotgun. Page 12 of [the 2018-2019 Rhode Island Hunting and Trapping Regulation Guide](#) includes specific information on deer hunting seasons.

In an email it sent to about 3,000 hunters who have purchased deer tags in 2019, DEM is advising the following precautions this hunting season.

## Mosquito Prevention

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use EPA-approved bug spray with one of the following active ingredients: DEET (20-30% strength); picaridin, IR3535; and oil of lemon eucalyptus or paramenthane. Always read the label and follow all directions and precautions. Protect yourself by wearing bug spray!
- Do not consume any harvested deer that appears unhealthy. Any harvested animal that is believed to be unhealthy should be reported to DEM’s Division of Law Enforcement at 401-222-3070.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when field dressing all game. At a minimum, this includes rubber or nitrile gloves and clothing that covers any part of the body that could be exposed to blood or other fluids.
- According to both the US Centers for Disease Control and USDA Wildlife Services, there is negligible risk to hunters for contracting EEE from field dressing, handling venison, or consuming venison **if proper personal protective equipment is worn while dressing, and the venison is properly cooked.**
- There is little or no risk from exposure to the brain or spinal cord of a deer infected with EEE, however there is a high risk for rabies transmission from brain and spinal cord tissue exposure through an open wound or mucous membrane (eyes, nose, mouth). Therefore, anyone who is decapitating or removing the antler cap from a deer during the time when the virus may be present (2 weeks after a killing frost) should wear eye protection and avoid any contact with brain or spinal cord tissue, or spinal fluid, with their eyes or any other mucous membrane.

## Tick Prevention

### Repel Ticks with DEET or Permethrin

- Use repellents that contain [20 to 30% DEET](#) (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on exposed skin and clothing for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions.
- Use products that contain [permethrin](#) on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5% permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may provide longer-lasting protection.
- Other repellents registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may be found at [Insect Repellents: Use and Effectiveness](#).

### Check for Ticks

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within 2 hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats, and day packs.
- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.
  - If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.
  - If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks effectively. If the clothes cannot be washed in hot water, tumble dry on low heat for 90 minutes or high heat for 60 minutes. The clothes should be warm and completely dry.

### Remove Ticks

To remove an attached tick, grasp with tweezers or forceps as close as possible to attachment (skin) site, and pull upward and out with a firm and steady pressure. If tweezers are not available, use fingers shielded with tissue paper or rubber gloves. Do not handle with bare hands. Be careful not to squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick which may contain infectious fluids. After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash hands. See or call a physician if there is concern about incomplete tick removal. It is important that a tick be removed as soon as it is discovered. Check after every two or three hours of outdoor activity for ticks attached to clothing or skin.

More tick prevention information is available online from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [RIDOH](#).

### “Smart scheduling” for communities

Previous mosquito prevention recommendations from RIDOH still are in effect. On Monday of last week, RIDOH recommended to schools and municipal leaders that games, practices, and other outdoor activities

scheduled to occur during early morning or dusk hours be rescheduled to earlier in the afternoon or relocated to an indoor venue. The “smart scheduling” of events is intended to help minimize the risk of mosquito bites for players, coaches, and spectators. RIDOH recommends that smart scheduling stay in effect for the remainder of the mosquito season, which typically ends in mid-October (after the first hard frost).

In addition to following this smart scheduling recommendation, there are other measures that Rhode Islanders should take to help minimize mosquito breeding.

## Get rid of mosquito breeding grounds

- Get rid of anything around your house and yard that collects water. Just one cup of water can produce hundreds of mosquitoes; an unused tire containing water can produce thousands of mosquitoes.
- Clean your gutters and downspouts so that they can drain properly.
- Remove any water from unused swimming pools, wading pools, boats, planters, trash and recycling bins, tires, and anything else that collects water, and cover them.
- Remove or treat any shallow water that can accumulate on top of a pool cover. Larvicide treatments, such as [Mosquito Dunks](#) can be applied to kill immature mosquitoes. This environmentally-friendly product is available at many hardware and garden stores and on-line.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least two times a week and rinse out birdbaths once a week.

## Best practices for horse owners

Horses are particularly susceptible to WNV and EEE. Horse owners are advised to vaccinate their animals early in the season and practice the following:

- Remove or cover areas where standing water can collect.
- Avoid putting animals outside at dawn, dusk, or during the night when mosquitoes are most active.
- Insect-proof facilities where possible and use approved repellents frequently.
- Monitor animals for symptoms of fever and/or neurological signs (such as stumbling, moodiness, loss of appetite) and report all suspicious cases to a veterinarian immediately. If you are unsure if your horse is properly vaccinated, you should consult with your veterinarian.

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