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Avoid mosquitoes and the diseases they carry

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- As we head into the final days of summer, Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) would like to remind everyone to continue to avoid mosquito bites and the diseases they can carry, like West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE).

West Nile Virus is a disease that is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people who contract WNV have no symptoms, but some may become ill three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms of West Nile virus can include high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, stiff neck, and a severe headache. More serious complications include meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain linings) and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). These diseases usually require hospitalization, can be life threatening, and even fatal.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis is a rare disease transmitted to mammals, such as people and horses, by the bite of an infected mosquito. It takes 4 to 10 days after the bite occurs to develop signs of EEE, but most people show either no or mild symptoms like a fever. Severe cases of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, vomiting, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) or meningitis (swelling of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord). Illness may then progress into seizures and coma.

One of the best ways you can protect yourself and your family is to use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered repellent containing DEET or Picaridin (following manufacturer's directions). Use of repellent is especially important between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active and most likely to bite.

Additional precautions include:

- Wearing a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and socks when heading outside.
- Treating clothing with repellent.
- Making sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens and repair those with tears or openings.
- Emptying water once a week from mosquito breeding sites like bird baths, buckets, unused wading pools, and old tires.

Additional information can be found at cdc.gov/westnile and cdc.gov/easternequineencephalitis/

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties.

We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.

Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

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