

Whitman Fire Department

Timothy J. Grenno, Fire
Chief

56 Temple St.
Whitman, MA 02382



Whitman Board of Health

Eric F. Joubert, Chairman

54 South Ave.
Whitman, MA 02382



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Benjamin Paulin
Phone: 781-428-3299
Email: ben@jgpr.net

Whitman Fire Department and Board of Health Offers Safety Reminders After EEE Virus Confirmed in Mosquitoes in Town

Whitman's Current Risk Level is 'High'

WHITMAN -- Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Timothy Grenno and Whitman Board of Health Chairman Eric Joubert would like to provide residents with safety reminders after the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus was confirmed in mosquitoes tested in Whitman last week.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has confirmed that the EEE virus has been detected in mosquito samples collected in Whitman this year. As a result of the tests, the MDPH has announced that the current risk level for Whitman is high.

Aerial spraying for mosquitoes in Whitman was completed by the MDPH and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) over the weekend. MDPH and MDAR officials will monitor the area over the coming weeks and plan to conduct a second round of spraying.

"The Board of Health is monitoring the situation and will continue to keep the public updated," Chairman Joubert said. "We would also like to remind Whitman residents that there are health regulations in place regarding standing water in yards and unkempt yards which are common areas where mosquitoes breed."

Whitman's environmental regulations for mosquito reduction can be found [here](#).

EEE is a rare but serious illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. While EEE can infect people of all ages, people under 15 or over 50 years of age are at the greatest risk for serious illness.

"Though scheduled outdoor activities are not affected by the results of the tests, taking preventative measures, especially the use of proper bug repellent, is a necessity for any outdoor activities, including sporting events," Chief Grenno said.

Chief Grenno and the Whitman Board of Health recommends the follow safety precautions offered by the MDPH to protect yourself and your loved ones:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- 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 the evening or early morning. If you are outdoors at any time and notice mosquitoes around you, take steps to avoid being bitten by moving indoors, covering up and/or wearing repellent.
- Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites: Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long sleeves, long pants and socks while outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

- Apply insect repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET, permethrin, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus 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 percent or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied directly to your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- Drain standing water: Many mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of 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 window and door screens: Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Information about EEE and reports of current and historical EEE virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the [MDPH website here](#).

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A message from the Whitman Fire Department

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John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC

8 Prospect St.

Georgetown, MA 01833

617-993-0003