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State Public Health Officials Announce Four New Human Cases of West Nile Virus in Massachusetts

Framingham, MA - The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced yesterday there are four additional human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in the State this year. This brings the total number of WNV cases in Massachusetts to seven.

According to the State's [news release](#), "as a result of information obtained during case investigations on where the four individuals were exposed to the virus, the communities of Cambridge, Newton, Somerville, and Watertown in Middlesex County were elevated to high risk for WNV. Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Sudbury, Waltham, Wayland, Weston, and Winchester, all in Middlesex County, were elevated to moderate risk. The municipalities of Dighton, Fall River, and Swansea in Bristol County were also elevated to moderate risk."

WNV [symptoms](#) tend to include fever and flu-like illness, and in rare cases, more severe illness can occur.

While Framingham's risk level was not elevated due to the new cases, the peak risk for WNV infection continues through September. By taking a few, common-sense precautions, people can help to protect themselves and 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 challenging to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **permethrin**, **picaridin** (KBR 3023), **IR3535**, or **oil of lemon eucalyptus** [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] 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. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets, and camping gear and should not be applied to the 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 the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens - Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarians about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and WNV.

Framingham belongs to the [Eastern Middlesex Mosquito Control Project](#) (EMMCP). EMMCP has completed applying larvicide to all catch basins in Framingham and continues to do the same in wetlands. Framingham Department of Public Health continues to work closely with the MDPH and EMMCP to monitor and respond to mosquito-related issues.

Information about EEE, WNV, and reports of current and historical mosquito-transmitted virus activity in Massachusetts can be found on the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito.