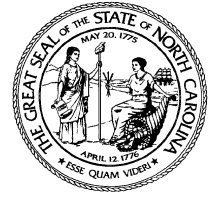




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Pubic Service Announcement Eastern Equine Encephalitis In Hoke County

Although no cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) have been identified in humans in NC the first equine case in a horse has occurred in Hoke County. This case highlights the fact that the disease is present and people should take precautions to protect themselves and their horses.

EEE is a rare disease. In North Carolina, it is more common in the eastern part of the state than in other areas. The viral illness, transmitted by some species of mosquitoes, attacks the central nervous system, causes inflammation of the brain and can be fatal to animals and humans. Wild birds serve as reservoirs for the virus. Mosquitoes bite the birds and then can transmit the virus to humans and animals.

Symptoms can in people develop from a few days to two weeks after being bitten by an infected mosquito. They include rapid onset of fever and headache and can resemble a case of the flu. Survivors of EEE infections may suffer from long-term effects to the nervous system. Therapy is limited to treating the symptoms of the disease, but there is no specific cure. There is a vaccine for horses but not for humans.

While there is no vaccine to protect humans from EEE, the disease can be prevented in horses with the use of vaccinations. The health department advises the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These efforts should include the "5 D's" for prevention:

- Dusk and Dawn – Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood. For many species, this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- Dress – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.
- DEET – When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide,) are recommended. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options.
- Drainage – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

To reduce mosquito breeding areas around your home and farm:

- Remove any containers that can hold water;
- Keep gutters clean and in good repair;

- Repair leaky outdoor faucets and change the water in bird baths and pet bowls at least twice a week;
- Use screened windows and doors and make sure screens fit tightly and are not torn.
- Keep tight-fitting screens or lids on rain barrels.

If you have specific questions pertaining to your horse and EEE please consult your veterinarian or the NCDA&CS at 919-733-7601. Recently NCDA&CS stressed the importance of vaccination for horses: <http://www.ncagr.gov/paffairs/release/2010/6-10Equinevaccinations.htm>.

See http://www.aaep.org/core_vaccinations.htm for additional details.

For more information: go to the NC DPH website:

<http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus/eee.html>