

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: September 18, 2019 **END DATE:** September 30, 2019

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RE: **GCHD Encourages Residents to Protect Themselves Against Mosquito-borne Diseases**

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) is urging residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites following reports of mosquito-borne disease cases in Genesee County and other areas of the state. While no human cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) have been reported in Genesee County, one animal case of EEE was confirmed in a deer in Genesee County and the deer was euthanized due to the severity of the disease symptoms. Seven human cases of EEE, including three fatal, have been confirmed in the following counties: Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren. Other mosquito-borne disease cases have been reported in Genesee County this year including one human West Nile Virus (WNV) and one California Group virus case. These cases lead GCHD to stress the importance of taking precautions against mosquito bites, especially during activities occurring at or after dusk, particularly activities that involve children.

Genesee County residents can stay healthy by following these steps to avoid mosquito bites, especially prior to outdoor activities:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.



- Children under 2 months old should not use repellent but rather be covered in clothing that covers arms and legs; strollers and baby carriers should be covered with mosquito netting.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Also apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

People can be infected with EEE, California Group encephalitis viruses, and WNV from the bite of a mosquito carrying the viruses. Infections can occur even when mosquito bite numbers are low. The diseases can affect anyone, however persons younger than age 15 and over age 50 are at greatest risk of severe illness following infection.

Signs of EEE and WNV include the sudden onset of fever, chills, body and joint aches.

Symptoms of California encephalitis virus include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and lethargy. The diseases can develop into severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should visit a health care provider or emergency room.

Further information about mosquito-borne disease is available at Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases and on the Genesee County Health Department website at www.gchd.us.

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work

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