





September 19, 2019

Good Morning Topsfield Families and Staff,

As you know, there has recently been a lot of information in the news regarding the mosquito-borne illness known as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). To provide you with additional information and clarity, I have assembled information from our local Board of Health and from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

When you hear “EEE” on the news, you typically hear about the risk levels which are: Remote; Low; Moderate; High; and Critical. As of yesterday (9/18/19) the risk level for Topsfield was raised to “high,” therefore, I have included a chart from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health which explains the five levels:

Key to Color Coding on EEE Risk Map		
Risk	What it Means	What You Can Do
Remote 	EEE is not usually found in your area	TO Prepare <ul style="list-style-type: none">Know your risk – check regularly at www.mass.gov/dph/wmvRepair screens
Low 	EEE may occur in your area	TO Prevent <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wear mosquito repellent between dusk to dawnWear long sleeves and long pants from dusk to dawnUse mosquito netting on baby carriages and playpens
Moderate 	EEE occurred in your area within the last year AND/OR there is EEE in mosquitoes in your area now	TO Prevent – add this <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wear mosquito repellent when outdoors, especially between dusk and dawnAvoid outside areas with obvious mosquito activity
High 	Conditions likely to lead to infection of a person with EEE are occurring in your area	TO Prevent – add this <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adjust outdoor activity to avoid peak mosquito hours (from dusk to dawn)Avoid overnight camping, particularly near freshwater swamps where EEE activity is most likely
Critical	Excessive risk from EEE virus exists, a person with EEE infection has been identified in your area	TO Prevent – add this <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cancel or reschedule outdoor gatherings, organized sporting events, etc. to avoid peak mosquito hours (dusk to dawn)

The time of day when mosquitoes are most active is from dusk (sunset) to dawn (sunrise). As a result, the Topsfield Board of Health is advising that **“schools and recreational groups reschedule their outdoor evening activities”** which is a recommendation that is supported by the above chart. Additionally, as per the guidance from the MA DPH, when our students are outside during the day, I have instructed the schools to have students avoid areas that may have higher mosquito activity such as

the wooded areas and the tree lines of our school campuses. Additional guidance from MA Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, is also instructive for all of us:

“We urge the public to use bug spray, wear long sleeves and pants and socks to reduce exposed skin, and stay indoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.”

Another important chart from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides recommendations for cancellation times of outdoor activities in communities designated as “high risk.”

<i>Massachusetts Department of Public Health Recommended Cancellation Times for Outdoor Activities Due to High Risk for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)</i>	
Activity Dates	Recommended Cancellation Time
August 25 - September 7	7:30 PM
September 8 - September 14	7:15 PM
September 15 - September 21	7:00 PM
September 22 - September 28	6:45 PM
September 29 - October 12	6:30 PM
October 13 - October 19	6:15 PM
October 20 - October 26	6:00 PM
October 27 - October 31	6:00 PM

Additionally, I am including further information below from a recent news release from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes:

Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) 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.

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 evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently. Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of 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 should be flushed out at least once a week during the 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 veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets about EEE in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage www.mass.gov/eee

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your school principal or me and for specific questions about EEE please contact the Topsfield Department of Public Health at 978-887-1520.

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Sincerely,
Scott R. Morrison, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Tri-Town School Union