



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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NEWS RELEASE
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Update on Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) Activity in Kalamazoo County

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services provides option to spray effected counties

KALAMAZOO, MI – Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (KCHCS), along with neighboring counties, continue conversations with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) regarding the option to apply an insecticide that aims to eliminate adult mosquitoes via airplane (aerially) in target locations in Southwest Michigan. This action would be taken to reduce the population of mosquitoes known to carry EEE in order to mitigate the ongoing public health risk.

An adulticide is a type of insecticide that targets and eliminates adult mosquitoes that carry diseases such as EEE. MDHHS has provided the option to apply adulticide to target areas of Kalamazoo County and other at-risk, neighboring counties. KCHCS has been in discussions with MDHHS to discuss the target locations in the county where spraying could occur, as well as the effectiveness and feasibility of spraying adulticide aerially within the county.

As temperatures remain warm between the hours of dusk to dawn (7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.), the public health risk of exposure to mosquitoes that carry EEE during that time remains high. An adulticide sprayed aerially between dusk and dawn, when the mosquitoes that carry EEE are active, would greatly reduce the population of those mosquitoes.

“While we continue to have discussions with our partners at the state regarding spraying, we strongly encourage residents to continue to take precautions such as using insect repellent with DEET, as well as wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors during the peak mosquito-biting hours which are dusk to dawn.” said James Rutherford, Health Officer of Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that EEE is one of the most dangerous mosquito-borne diseases in the United States, with a 33 percent fatality rate in people who become ill and a 90 percent fatality rate in horses that become ill. Early symptoms of EEE include the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills, body and joint aches. Symptoms usually appear 4-10 days after exposure. EEE can develop into severe encephalitis (brain swelling), resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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To date there are eight (8) confirmed human cases in Michigan: three (3) in Kalamazoo County, one (1) in Berrien County, one (1) in Barry County, one (1) in Calhoun County, one (1) in Van Buren County, and one (1) in Cass County. One of the confirmed individuals from Kalamazoo County has died.

KCHCS is continuing to remind Kalamazoo County residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites. The best way to prevent EEE or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. **Avoid outdoor activities from dusk until dawn. If outdoor activities are necessary, please take the following precautions:**

- Using EPA registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, and 2-undecanone; follow the product label instructions and reapply as directed.
 - Don't use repellent on children under 2 months old. Instead dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs and cover crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- Wearing shoes and socks, light-colored long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors.
- Making sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings.
- Using bed nets when sleeping outdoors or in conditions with no window screens.
- Eliminating all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding around your home, including water in bird baths, abandoned swimming pools, wading pools, old tires and any other object holding water once a week.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas

For more information, visit michigan.gov/eee or cdc.gov/eee

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