



# MOSQUITOES

DREADED SUMMER PESTS, AND WORSE!

We all try to avoid mosquitoes and the itchy bites they leave us with. Though most mosquitoes are not disease carriers, in Massachusetts there are 2 serious viruses carried by mosquitoes that can cause damage: West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis.



## EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

Very rare occurrence - there have been only 100 cases in Massachusetts in the past 75 years. Although rare, it is deadly - over 30% of those identified as having EEE died. Inflammation and swelling of the brain (encephalitis) is the most dangerous and frequent serious complication.

Survivors of the disease will often be permanently disabled and there is no cure. Severe cases (involving the brain) of EEE begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting.



## WEST NILE VIRUS



West Nile is a much more common disease, but 80% of people bitten have no symptoms or infection. Less than 1% of infected people will have severe illness - about 10% of the severely ill will die. Symptoms are fever, headaches, body aches, nausea.

*Mosquitoes must spend a good part of their life cycle in stagnant water. The best way to reduce the mosquito population is to reduce the breeding grounds, and to encourage strong, healthy predators.*



Potential mosquito habitats in and around your home

## WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Decrease mosquito breeding areas by removing stagnant water.
- Seek out and eliminate cupped surfaces of trapped water such as in flower pots, backed up gutters and wheelbarrows.
- Change bird baths at least every other day.

## ENCOURAGE MOSQUITO PREDATION

- Build bird houses and bat houses.
- Make sure ponds remain unpolluted and are stocked with fish.
- Grow cattails or bulrushes that will attract bird and insect predators such as dragonflies.

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BITES

- Repair/replace your window/door screens.
- Wear protective clothing early morning and evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use insect repellent on exposed areas and clothing.
- Report flu type symptoms to your doctor or practitioner.

*Note: Electric zappers are not very effective at reducing the mosquito population and they also kill mosquito predators along with mosquitoes.*

For more info: [www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito](http://www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito)

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