

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Health Department Flooded With 'Mosquito Concerns' *"Communities Plagued by Mosquito Swarms"*

The Oneida County Health Department has been flooded with calls over the past several days from residents of Whitesboro, Marcy, Oriskany and Rome expressing concerns over what appears to be an unprecedented mosquito population in their area.

*"Most of the calls are from concerned parents worrying about their children being swarmed by the insects as they wait for the school bus,"* Dr. Gayle Jones, Director of Health said. She continued *"People living in communities that straddle the Mohawk River and Barge Canal from Whitesboro to Rome say they've never seen such a large mosquito population in their area."*

A positive finding for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in six pools of mosquitoes collected in July and early August prompted the aerial spraying of about 27,000 acres in western Oneida County on August 27<sup>th</sup> and August 28<sup>th</sup>. Jones stressed that there have been no positive findings for any mosquito-borne viruses in any of the mosquito pools collected since, so no additional spraying is planned. *"As much of a nuisance as they can be, the mosquitoes do not pose a threat to public health at this time,"* Jones said.

The hot weather throughout the summer has made for ideal mosquito breeding conditions which accounts for the large number of pesky insects.

*"The life span of a mosquito is about two weeks, so what people are seeing now are new generations of mosquitoes and not the result of a 'mosquito migration' from the areas where spraying was conducted, as some have speculated,"* Jones said. "

According to health department officials, people should, nonetheless, take some precautions to avoid being bitten:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors.
- Limit outside activity particularly at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeves and pants covering as much skin as possible, weather permitting.
- Eliminate standing water around your property - wading pools, bird baths, old tires, buckets, etc. - that can serve as a breeding area for mosquitoes.
- Make sure window screens and doors are secure to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.

Apart from these measures, residents are at the mercy of 'Mother Nature,' according to Jones. *"We can all wish for an early frost to kill off the mosquito population,"* she said.