

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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### All Oneida County Specimens to Date Test Negative for EEE “Eastern Equine Encephalitis Found in Oswego County Mosquito Pool”

None of the mosquito specimens collected in Oneida County so far this year have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Dr. Gayle Jones, Director of Health for Oneida County confirmed after learning that the virus was found in a pool of bird-biting mosquitoes in neighboring Oswego County.

*“The Oneida County Health Department aggressively monitors insect pools for EEE, West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne viruses throughout the summer months. Specimens are collected at more than a dozen sites throughout the county and submitted for testing on a weekly basis from the beginning of June through September,”* Jones said.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis, considered among the most serious mosquito-borne viruses in the United States, has been identified in mosquito pools collected in Oswego County during the last week of June. EEE has not been reported in Oneida County in three years. In August of 2006, it was determined that a pony died from the virus resulting in the aerial spraying of a 5-mile radius of the farm where the animal lived.

EEE is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito and is most commonly associated with a species of mosquito that feeds almost exclusively on birds. Transmission of the virus to humans requires mosquito species capable of creating a ‘bridge’ between infected birds and uninfected mammals. Horses are susceptible to EEE infection which can be fatal. Jones said anyone could be infected with EEE, but those who visit woodlands and people who work outside are at greater risk due to greater exposure to potentially infected mosquitoes.

According to Jones, it takes 4 to 10 days for symptoms to develop in humans after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Severe cases of EEE in humans begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness could progress into disorientation, seizures and coma. About a third of patients who develop EEE die from the disease, while a significant number who survive have mild to severe brain damage. Diagnosis is made through blood or spinal fluid testing and there is no specific treatment.

People can reduce their risk of getting infected with EEE by preventing mosquito bites:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET on exposed skin and/or clothing when outdoors.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when weather permits.
- Have secure intact screens on windows and doors.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets, barrels; Drill holes in tire swings so water drains and keep children’s wading pools empty and upside down when not being used.

For more information on Eastern Equine Encephalitis and other mosquito-borne viruses, contact the Oneida County Health Department at **798-5064** or visit our web site at [ocgov.net](http://ocgov.net).

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