

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Awaited Test Results Yield Another 'Positive' for EEE *"Virus Suspected in Two More Horse Deaths "*

The Oneida County Health Department today reported that test results on a suspected case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse in the north Rome/Lee Center has confirmed that the animal was infected with the disease when it was euthanized last week after developing neurological symptoms. Two previous confirmed cases of EEE in horses occurred in the Town of Westmoreland and in Camden.

This brings the total number of confirmed horse cases of EEE in Oneida County this year to three, with results on two more suspected cases involving horses still pending, health department officials said. The virus, which is spread through the bite of a mosquito, is fatal to horses in up to 95% of the cases. An animal that survives can be left with long-lasting impairments and neurological problems often requiring that the animal be put down for humane reasons once a diagnosis of EEE is made. There is an effective vaccine available for horses recommended by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP).

Neighboring Oswego County has reported five cases of EEE in horses and a human case resulting in the death of a five-year-old girl. Additionally, neighboring Herkimer County is investigating a possible EEE death involving a dog.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis is rarely transmitted to humans; however the death of a five-year-old Oswego County girl in August has been attributed to the virus. Human cases are often asymptomatic or present as a mild flu-like illness. In rare cases the infection can be more severe. The period from July through September is when the transmission of the disease appears most common, with persons under 15 years of age and over 50 years at greatest risk of developing severe symptoms of EEE.

The Oneida County Health Department reminds people to limit outdoor activity, particularly at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Wear long sleeves, pants and use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors. Eliminate standing water around your property that might serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and keep window and door screens in good repair.

For more information on Eastern Equine Encephalitis or other mosquito-borne illnesses contact the Oneida County Health Department or visit our web site at ocgov.net.

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