



ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES
Partners in Public Health

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CONTACT PERSON: JILL C. JORDAN

(252) 338-4483

EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS (EEE)

Pasquotank A case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) has recently been identified in a Camden County horse. This is the sixth case of EEE identified across the state since September 15, 2017. No human cases of EEE have been identified in NC so far this year.

Perquimans

Camden Eastern equine encephalitis EEE is a rare disease that is caused by a virus spread by infected mosquitoes. EEE virus (EEEV) is one of a group of mosquito-transmitted viruses that can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). Only a few cases of people infected by EEE are reported in the United States each year. Most cases occur in the Atlantic and Gulf Coast states. North Carolina averages about one case of EEE per year. The disease is more common in the eastern part of the state, where the virus is normally passed back and forth between wild birds and mosquitoes.

Chowan

Currituck

Bertie EEEV is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Disease transmission does not occur directly from person to person. Anyone in an area where the virus is circulating can get infected with EEEV. The risk is highest for people who live or visit woodland habitats, and people who work outside or participate in outdoor recreational activities, because of greater exposure to potentially infected mosquitoes.

Gates

Most persons infected with EEE have no apparent symptoms. Severe cases of EEE (involving [encephalitis](#), an inflammation of the brain) begin with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may then progress into disorientation, seizures, or coma, which may result in death or in severe brain damage. About one in three cases is fatal, with young children and the elderly most at risk.

There is a vaccine for horses. The American Association of Equine Practitioners recommends vaccination against EEE as a part of a core vaccination protocol: <https://aaep.org/guidelines/vaccination-guidelines/core-vaccination-guidelines> Once a horse is infected, therapy is limited to treating the symptoms of the disease, and there is no specific cure.

There is no vaccine to protect humans from EEE, and no cure once a human is infected. Therapy is limited to treating the symptoms of the disease. However, humans can protect themselves from EEE with repellents, especially during the months of July through October <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>.



R. Battle Betts, Jr., MPA, Health Director
P.O. Box 189 • 711 Roanoke Avenue • Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27907-0189
Tel: 252-338-4400 • Fax: 252-338-4449 • www.arhs-nc.org



A second method is judicious suppression of mosquito populations, especially in the areas near freshwater hardwood swamps <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/controlling-mosquitoes-at-home.html>.

The health department advises the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These efforts should include the "5 D's" for prevention:

- Dusk and Dawn – Minimize time outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood. The common species that transmit EEE to humans often bite at just before or after sunset.
 - Dress – Wear loose, light-colored clothing that covers most of your skin.
 - DEET – When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide,) are recommended. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options. See www.epa.gov/insect-repellents for options.
 - Drainage – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
 - Dispose of any tires. Tires can breed thousands of mosquitoes.
 - Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers.
 - Clear roof gutters of debris.
 - Clean pet water dishes regularly.
 - Check and empty children's toys.
 - Repair leaky outdoor faucets.
 - Change the water in bird baths at least once a week.
 - Turn over canoes and other boats, or treat them with approved larvicides.
 - Avoid water collecting on pool covers.
 - Empty water collected in tarps around the yard or on woodpiles.
 - Plug or fill tree holes.
 - Add minnows to isolated water such as rain barrels and ornamental ponds.
 - Use screened windows and doors and make sure screens fit tightly and are not torn.
 - Keep tight-fitting screens or lids on rain barrels.
 - Even the smallest of containers can breed hundreds to thousands of mosquitoes. They don't need much water to lay their eggs. (bottles, barrels, buckets, overturned garbage can lids, etc.)
- Pasquotank
- Perquimans
- Camden
- Chowan
- Currituck
- Bertie
- Gates

For additional information, please contact Ralph Hollowell, Environmental Health Director, ARHS, at (252) 338-4490 or Nancy Nash, Nursing Director, ARHS, at (252) 338-4411.

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