



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

TO: Municipal, Community and School Leaders of Kalamazoo County
FROM: Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (KCHCSD)
DATE: September 9, 2019
ATTACHMENTS: 8/26/19 MDHHS and 9/6/19 KCHCSD Press Releases

RE: Rare, Deadly Mosquito-borne Infection Risk

Kalamazoo County is experiencing widespread activity of a rare, deadly mosquito-borne disease known as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Two cases of EEE have now been confirmed in Kalamazoo County residents; other possible cases are under investigation. One of the confirmed cases has died. For perspective, only six cases of EEE were reported in the entire United States in 2018.

Most who are infected with the virus that causes EEE do not become ill. However, persons below the age of 15 or above the age of 50 years have greater risk of developing a severe infection that has high potential for permanent brain damage or death. Kalamazoo County residents will continue to be at risk for EEE infection until the first frost decreases mosquito populations. The mosquito species that transmits the EEE virus to humans is most active from dusk until dawn.

Given demonstrated human transmission of EEE in Kalamazoo County and ongoing risk of infection, KCHCSD has recommended personal protective measures to county residents which include avoiding outdoor activities from dusk until dawn and using EPA-registered insect repellent (see attached press release). Additionally, municipal, community and school leaders should consider taking the following actions:

- When possible, consider rescheduling, relocating, or cancelling outdoor activities from dusk until dawn until the first frost of the season. If outdoor events are planned between dusk and dawn, attendees should be encouraged to protect themselves with EPA-registered insect repellants that include DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone and by wearing shoes with socks, light-colored long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Children under 2 months old should not use repellent but rather be covered in clothing that covers arms and legs; strollers and baby carriers should be covered with mosquito netting.
- Eliminate sources of standing water around your respective institutions and jurisdictions.
- Ensure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings.
- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.
- Encourage the use of bed nets for those sleeping outdoors or in conditions with no window screens.
- Reiterate these messages on your social media platforms.

We thank you for your partnership in protecting the health of our community.

Sincerely,

James A. Rutherford, MPA – Health Officer/Director

William Nettleton, MD, MPH – Medical Director

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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