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Eau Claire County Horse Tests Positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus *Continue to protect yourself from mosquito bites*

October 4, 2024, Eau Claire – The Eau Claire City-County Health Department has confirmed that a horse in Eau Claire County has tested positive for [eastern equine encephalitis](#) (EEE), a rare but serious infection caused by the EEE virus. This is the first confirmed case of EEE in a horse in Eau Claire County this year.

This means the virus is present in Eau Claire County's mosquito population. Only one human case of EEE was reported in Wisconsin this year, though that person most likely acquired the infection while traveling to another state.

People who become infected with EEE may develop fever, headache, chills, and vomiting. This virus can cause inflammation of the brain, which can lead to disorientation, seizures, or coma. Around 30% of people who develop severe EEE disease will die, and those who do survive often experience long-term neurologic problems. Adults over 50 and children under 15 are at highest risk for developing severe EEE disease. There is no specific vaccine or treatment for EEE available for people.

Since EEE virus is known to be circulating in Eau Claire County, residents and visitors should be vigilant in preventing mosquito bites.

Humans and horses can only get EEE from a mosquito bite. The virus is **not** spread person-to-person, directly between animals, or between animals and humans.

Horses with EEE may experience symptoms such as impaired vision, inability to swallow, lack of coordination, depression, loss of appetite, drooping eyelids and lower lip, blindness, paralysis, and death. EEE is fatal in up to 90% of horses that show signs of illness. Horse owners should contact their veterinarian if they observe any of these symptoms. Horse owners can vaccinate their horses against EEE virus to protect them from becoming ill. The American Association of Equine Practitioners recommends vaccinating for both EEE and West Nile Virus (WNV).

Follow these tips to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:



Avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply an insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and clothing.
- Before heading outdoors, treat clothing with permethrin (do not apply permethrin directly to skin).
- Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that happen in evening or early morning hours when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-proof your home:

- Make sure window and door screens are intact and tightly fitted to prevent mosquitoes from getting into your home.
- Prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home by removing stagnant water from items around your property, like tin cans, plastic containers, flowerpots, discarded tires, roof gutters, and downspouts.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, kiddie pools, buckets, and small boats like canoes and kayaks when not in use.
- Change the water in bird baths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim or mow tall grass, weeds, and vines, since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.

For more information about EEE, visit: [About Eastern Equine Encephalitis | Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus | CDC](#).

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