

Town of Bedford Public Announcement

To: Bedford Community and Bedford Public Schools Employees and Families

From: Amy Hamilton, Recreation Director, Jon Sills, Superintendent of Schools and Heidi Porter, Health Director

Date: September 7, 2019

As you are certainly aware through news reports and Town of Bedford announcements, the threat of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE or Triple E) is increasing throughout Massachusetts and our nearby towns. EEE infected mosquitoes have been identified in Bedford (from a trap location on Winterberry Way) and Burlington. While the Town of Bedford has worked diligently to execute our mosquito control program this year, the strongest method for preventing mosquito bites from potentially infected mosquitoes is to avoid being outdoors during their peak biting times. As such, in consultation with the Bedford Board of Health, the Bedford Public Schools and Bedford Recreation Department are canceling outdoor activities that occur between dusk and dawn until further notice. This includes school- and community-sponsored athletic events, practices, and all other organized activities scheduled to take place out of doors. In addition, no day-time school activities should be carried out in wooded areas beyond the playing fields. At this time, the schools are not making changes to recess routines for students during the school day. While we understand that postponing or rescheduling planned events can be somewhat disruptive, these precautions are being taken to ensure the safety of our children and community members.

All outdoor recreational facilities, including athletic fields, ball courts, public parks, playgrounds, and sport courts are also closed between dusk and dawn. Community members are advised to follow suit and avoid being outdoors between dusk and dawn as well. When outdoors at any time, but especially between dusk and dawn, you are advised to apply mosquito repellent in accordance with manufacturer's instructions; dress in long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks; use mosquito netting on baby carriages; and, ensure window and door screens are in good repair.

Parents are encouraged to apply mosquito repellent to students' clothing before sending them to school or send students with mosquito repellent towelettes or non-aerosol lotions to self-apply before recess. Please be aware that school personnel are unable to apply insect repellent to students without a doctor's order.

Information about mosquito activity in Massachusetts during 2019 can be found on the Mosquito-borne Disease page on the MDPH website at <https://www.mass.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases>. Facts sheets on EEE and other mosquito-related materials are available by contacting the Bedford Board of Health at 781-275-6507 or by accessing their website at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/health>.