



# MADISON COUNTY DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## **Web Release**

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### ***Peak Mosquito Season is Upon Us***

The next time you go outside to fight mosquitoes, know this: Madison County's Health Department is carefully watching and analyzing the types of mosquitoes in our county to help prevent and reduce the spread of mosquito-borne disease for everyone. Late August is the time of year when mosquito populations tend to peak and the most numerous samplings of the insects come from The Towns of Sullivan and Lenox as they provide large areas of poorly drained land (including wetlands and mucklands) which provide ideal conditions for mosquitoes to multiply.

The mosquito populations in the Town of Sullivan have been highly scrutinized recently due to the findings of positive Eastern Equine Encephalitis( EEE) virus and West Nile Virus (WNV) in the adjoining counties of Onondaga and Oneida Counties, where there have been both positive pools confirmed and one horse fatality. Oswego County has been hardest hit of the four (Madison, Onondaga, Oneida and Oswego) central New York counties this year with EEE, as a young girl and two horses have died from the EEE virus. No positive samples of EEE and only one positive pool of WNV has been found in the Town of Sullivan to date.

While the County conducts surveillance for the few specific types of mosquitoes that spread the EEE and WNV viruses, there are over 150 species of mosquitoes which might be making a nuisance of themselves in your backyard. To keep mosquitoes from multiplying, the Madison County Department of Health needs plenty of public cooperation and asks everyone to get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets, barrels and other containers. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out, and keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when not being used.



Spraying will not erase EEE or WNV from the environment and is not the answer for our mosquito woes at this point in time. The choice of aerial or truck spraying is a last resort for municipalities for many reasons:

- Few of the types of mosquitoes that typically create the nuisance conditions actually carry WNV and EEE.
- Interventions such as ground or aerial spraying of adulticide (pesticide that kills adult mosquitoes) can only be taken in response to virus being detected and the risk of human exposure significant.
- Aerial spraying reduces the number of mosquitoes for a very short time -- typically no longer than one week.

Such a drastic step such as aerial spraying can only be taken in response to certain conditions, including:

- The number of positive mosquito samplings to date
- The species of mosquito involved (some are bird-biting only, while others are mammal biting)
- The site(s) involved
- Timing within the mosquito activity season and estimated length of mosquito activity season left in the year
- The weather

The Madison County Health Department is taking every proactive step possible to provide safe conditions for the health of the public. Your help is needed to keep down the mosquito populations starting where you live.

For more information on either WNV or EEE, <http://www.healthymadisoncounty.org>

*Virginia Zombek is a Public Health Educator with Madison County Department of Health*

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