

## PRESS RELEASE

**TO:** Marquette County Media

**FROM:** Marquette County Health Department

**CONTACT:** Patrick L. Jacuzzo, Director of Environmental Health, 906-475-9977

**DATE:** October 20, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Marquette County**

The Marquette County Health Department was notified this morning of an Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) positive ruffed grouse in Marquette County. Per the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Eastern Equine Encephalitis has now been diagnosed in four ruffed grouse in the UP in the past few years. The presence of EEE in wild bird populations is a strong indication that EEE is carried by local mosquitos in Marquette County and throughout the UP.

Marquette County and UP residents are urged to take precautions and protect themselves from mosquito bites as EEE is one of the most dangerous mosquito-borne diseases in the U.S., with a 33 percent fatality rate among humans who become ill.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis has a 90 percent fatality rate in horses that become ill, and infection in both people and animals occurs through the bite of an infected mosquito. Eastern Equine Encephalitis is not spread from person-to-person.

Signs of EEE include the sudden onset of fever, chills, and body and joint aches. Illness can eventually develop into severe encephalitis, resulting in headache, disorientation, tremors, seizures and paralysis. Permanent brain damage, coma and death may also occur in some cases.

Residents can stay healthy by following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved product, to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintain window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Empty water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.

Main Office  
184 U.S. 41 East,  
Negaunee, MI 49866  
[www.mqthealth.org](http://www.mqthealth.org)



- Use nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

To safeguard their horses, owners could take the following measures:

- Talking to a veterinarian about vaccinating horses against EEE.
- Placing horses in a barn under fans (as mosquitoes are not strong flyers) during peak mosquito activity from dusk to dawn.
- Using an insect repellent on the animals approved for the species.
- Eliminating standing water on the property-i.e., fill in puddles, repair eaves, and change the water in buckets and bowls at least once a day.
- Contacting a veterinarian if a horse shows signs of the illness: mild fever and stumbling, which can progress to being down and struggling to stand.

Mosquito-borne illness will continue to be a risk in Michigan until late fall when nighttime temperatures consistently fall below freezing.

For more information about mosquito-borne diseases, visit [Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://Michigan.gov/emergingdiseases).

###