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Pauline Clifford, Health Director

TO: Foxboro Reporter
Cable Access

FROM: Pauline Clifford, Health Director

DATE: June 23, 2014

RE: Mosquitoes

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People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

DPH has produced a series of 30-second videos on how to prevent mosquito and tick bites and the illnesses that can result. All videos can be found at www.mass.gov/MosquitoesAndTicks.

So establish good habits now:

- Pick a repellent with an EPA-approved active ingredient
- Use long sleeves to cover up when possible.
- Repair screens
- Remove standing water to help reduce mosquito populations
- Teach children to be aware of mosquito activity around them and avoid it

NOTE: The mosquito-borne virus, Chikungunya, continues to be very active in the Caribbean. The mosquitoes that spread this disease are active during the day. Travelers to that area should be strongly encouraged to use mosquito repellents any time they are outdoors and should make sure that there are intact screens on any open windows where they are staying.