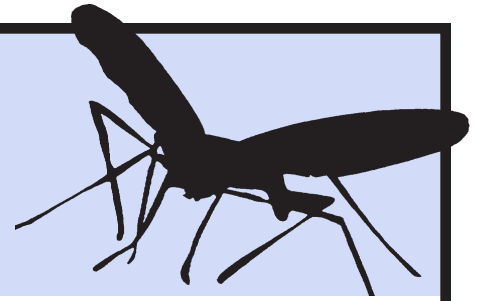


Eastern Equine Encephalitis

2013 Human Study Results



In 2013, The Vermont Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a study to learn more about Eastern equine encephalitis in Vermont.

What is Eastern equine encephalitis?

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious viral disease. It is spread by mosquitoes and most commonly affects people and horses. It does not spread from person to person or from mammal to mammal. Other species that can become ill include emus, alpacas, llamas and other equids. In recent years, EEE has been found in people, animals and mosquitoes in northern Rutland and southern Addison Counties.

What was the goal of the study?

The goal of the study was to learn if people in three Vermont towns were infected with Eastern equine encephalitis virus without realizing it. With most infections, some people have mild or no symptoms, but we don't know how common this is with EEE virus infections.

Who participated in the study?

Residents of Brandon, Whiting, or Sudbury, Vermont who were 12 years or older at the time of the study were eligible to participate. These towns were selected because evidence of EEE virus had been found in these locations in 2012. The study was done in April and May of 2013.

What was involved with participating in the study?

Eligible individuals were asked to complete a brief survey and to provide a small blood sample. The blood was tested for antibodies to EEE virus at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What were the results of the study?

In all, 364 blood samples were tested for antibodies to EEE virus. This was about eight percent of the total population of the three towns. All samples tested negative for antibodies against EEE virus. This means that there was no evidence that anyone in the study group had been bitten by an infected mosquito.

What do the results mean?

The results suggest that infection with EEE virus is uncommon. The results also suggest that EEE infections that are mild or cause no symptoms are uncommon. Because no one tested positive, we cannot make any conclusions about which behaviors or activities might put someone at risk for getting bitten by an infected mosquito.

It is important to keep in mind that this is one small study, and these results may not exactly describe what is happening in the community. The median age of the participants was 60 years. This is substantially higher than the median age of Vermonters, which is 42 years. Besides being older, people who chose to participate in the study may be different in other ways than people who chose not to participate. For example, people who participated in the study might not have had as much exposure to mosquitoes as typical residents of these towns.

We expect that infections with EEE virus in your area and in Vermont will remain rare. However, because infections may result in serious illness or death, it is important for people to prevent mosquito bites.

2.2014

For more information – healthvermont.gov

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