



# Eastern Equine Encephalitis

## What you need to know

Southwest Health District

[www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org](http://www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org)

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease. EEE virus (EEEV) occurs in the eastern half of the United States where it causes disease in humans, horses and some bird species. The mortality rate from EEE is approximately one-third, making it one of the most deadly mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.

### What are symptoms of Eastern Equine Encephalitis?

Many persons infected with EEEV have no apparent illness. In those persons who do develop illness, symptoms range from mild flu-like illness to EEE (inflammation of the brain), coma and death.

### Incubation time

It usually takes three to 10 days for symptoms to appear after exposure to the infection.

### What is the treatment for EEE?

There is no specific treatment for EEE; optimal medical care includes hospitalization and supportive care (for example, expert nursing care, respiratory support, prevention of secondary bacterial infections and physical therapy, depending on the situation).

### Long term effects of EEE

Approximately half of those persons who survive EEE will have mild to severe permanent neurologic damage.

### Who is at risk?

Persons over age 50 and younger than age 15 seem to be at greatest risk for developing severe EEE when infected with the virus.

States with largest number of cases are Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts and New Jersey. EEEV transmission is most common in and around freshwater hardwood swamps our region. People who spend time outdoors in swampy areas when mosquitoes are active should take precautions.

### What precautions can I take?

There is no vaccine available to protect humans from EEE. A vaccine is available to protect horses. To protect yourself:

- Avoid outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active – at dawn and dusk
- Cover exposed skin if you must be outside
- Use insect repellent with active ingredients such as DEET, oil or lemon eucalyptus or picaridin
- Drain standing water
- Repair screens