



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

Grady County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Southwest Health District confirms mosquito-borne virus in Grady County

A horse in Grady County has tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a disease that can cause severe illness in humans, said Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant.

“This virus is spread the same way as West Nile virus, through the bite of an infected mosquito,” Grant said. “We know from this positive case that the virus is circulating in our District. Mosquitoes carrying the virus can bite people as well as horses.”

It generally takes from 3 to 10 days to develop symptoms of EEE after being bitten by an infected mosquito, she said. Many persons infected with Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus have no apparent illness.

However, said Grant, those who do become ill face the risk of severe disease.

“Symptoms range from mild flu-like illness to inflammation or swelling of the brain, coma and death,” she said. “Further, the mortality rate from EEE is approximately one-third, making it one of the most deadly mosquito-borne diseases in the United States. That makes EEE a big Public Health concern.”

In addition, approximately half of those persons who survive EEE will have mild to severe permanent neurologic damage.

“There’s no specific treatment for the infection. Hospitalization and supportive care is provided to those who develop severe infections,” Grant said.

She also warned that there are no human vaccines to offer protection from infection from Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

“But there are actions people can take to minimize their risk of being infected by a mosquito-borne virus,” Grant said. They include:

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

- Using insect repellent with an EPA-approved active ingredient such as DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus
- Avoiding outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, the time mosquitoes are most active
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when outdoors during times mosquitoes are active
- Empty outdoor containers that collect standing water
- Repair screens on windows and doors
- A vaccine is available to protect equines, so owners should have their animals vaccinated

Young children and the elderly are at highest risk for becoming ill from Eastern Equine

Encephalitis, Grant noted.

“Persons who work or spend significant amounts of time outdoors or in swampy areas are also at risk. The EEE virus commonly circulates between birds and mosquitoes in swampy areas,” she said.

Mosquito-borne viruses are most active late spring through early fall in Georgia. Increased numbers of human cases are normally detected in August.

The most common mosquito-borne viruses that circulate in Georgia every year include Eastern Equine Encephalitis, West Nile and La Crosses viruses.

For more information about Eastern Equine Encephalitis, contact the Grady County Health Department or go online to www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org,

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arboreeefact.htm or

<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/vbd/mosquito.asp>.

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