



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

VIRAL EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS (VEE)

What is VEE?

VEE is a viral disease that can affect the brain, spine cord and other parts of the central nervous system. There are many different types of VEE depending on the area of the world. The disease may affect either humans or horses.

The Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus is the most serious and has a high death rate of about 50% to 70 %, with survivors often having permanent symptoms.

How is VEE spread?

VEE may be spread through the following ways:

- a bite from infected mosquitoes or other blood sucking insects
- the release of the virus through the tiny particles in the air (laboratory setting)

VEE could possibly be used as a weapon of bioterrorism by making the bacteria airborne.

VEE can not be spread from person to person.

What are possible symptoms of VEE?

Most people have no symptoms of VEE, although some people do have the following general symptoms:

- mild-flu like illness
- fever
- headache
- sore throat

Severe Cases:

- sensitivity to light
- muscle aches
- nausea/vomiting
- tiredness
- drooling
- seizures/paralysis
- coma
- death

How is VEE diagnosed?

VEE is diagnosed through blood or spinal fluid.

What is the treatment for exposure to VEE?

There is a vaccine for horses, but currently not for humans. There is no specific antibiotic treatment for the infections caused by VEE. Doctors usually try to treat the symptoms on an individual basis.

How can VEE be prevented?

A person can prevent the viral infections of VEE by staying inside between dusk and dark when the mosquitoes are the heaviest, by wearing long pant and long sleeved shirts, or by applying insect repellent to any exposed skin when out doors.

For more information on VEE contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>
Phone: (888) 246-2675