



“Learning together with pride and respect”  
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**Dear Parents,**

**We want to bring your attention to a very serious health issue called eastern equine encephalitis (EEE).** EEE is a very serious viral infection transmitted to people from the bite of an infected mosquito. One-third of those identified with the symptoms die of the disease, and half of the survivors suffer from permanent brain damage. The disease is especially severe in children and older adults. EEE virus is most commonly found in mosquitoes in and near wetlands, especially freshwater hardwood (red maple) and cedar wetlands. Currently, there is no vaccine or effective treatment for humans. Therefore, prevention strategies are critical, especially for our fall sports athletes.

**The EEE virus was first identified in a horse in Maine in 2005.** In the fall of 2008, a man spending time in Cumberland County and a horse from York County died of the disease. In recent days and weeks EEE virus has killed horses in York, Cumberland, Kennebec, Waldo, and Penobscot Counties. These horses mean infected mosquitoes posing a risk to people are present. **Although the risk of contracting the disease from one particular mosquito bite is very small,** since any one mosquito is unlikely to be infected, the risk for contracting EEE is much more widespread geographically than previously thought. Therefore, we must take action.

Our best defense is to PREVENT MOSQUITO BITES! Adults and children participating in outdoor activities for a significant amount of time when the temperature is greater than 50 degrees are encouraged to:

- **Cover up** by wearing long sleeves, socks, and pants; and/or
- Use an effective **insect repellent** containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin and/or clothing is an effective deterrent. The repellent/insecticide permethrin can be used on clothing and be effective through several washes. *\*Please note that RSU 34 can not provide insect repellent, however, we do strongly urge you to provide it for your student in accordance with the package directions.*

Thank you for your help in this matter. **For more information on EEE consider the following:**

- Maine CDC EEE Website <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/vector-borne/index.shtml>
- US CDC Insect Repellent Website  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm)

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cyr AP/AD