What is Eastern Equine Encephalitis?
Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus.

How is the EEE virus spread?
The virus that causes EEE is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. In Rhode Island, the virus is most often identified in mosquitoes found in and around freshwater, hardwood swamps. EEE virus particularly infects birds, often with no evidence of illness in the bird. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite infected birds. Although humans and several other types of mammals, particularly horses and llamas, can become infected, they do not spread disease.

How common is EEE in Rhode Island?
EEE is a very rare disease. Rhode Island has only had four human cases since 2010.

What are the symptoms of EEE?
The first symptoms of EEE are fever (often 103°F to 106°F), stiff neck, headache, and lack of energy. These symptoms show up four to ten days after a bite from an infected mosquito. Inflammation and swelling of the brain, called encephalitis, is the most dangerous and frequent serious complication. The disease gets worse quickly and some patients may go into a coma within a week.

What is the treatment for EEE?
There is no treatment for EEE. People who survive this disease will often be permanently disabled. Few people recover completely.

What can you do to protect yourself from EEE?
Since the virus that causes EEE is spread by mosquitoes, here are some things you can do to reduce your chances of being bitten:

- Schedule outdoor events to avoid the hours between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- When you are outdoors, wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and socks. This may be difficult to do when the weather is hot, but it will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
Did you know?

Mosquitoes can begin to multiply in any puddle or standing water that lasts for more than four days! Mosquito breeding sites can be anywhere. **Take action** to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood. Organize a neighborhood clean up day to pick up containers from vacant lots and parks and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water. Mosquitoes don’t care about fences, so it’s important to remove areas of standing water throughout the neighborhood.

Where can I get more information?

- Your doctor, nurse, or health care clinic, the Rhode Island Department of Health at 401-222-5960 or health.ri.gov/mosquito.