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at DHHS, expects it to be back again next year. "We're bracing for another active year again next year," she said.

John Burger, an entomologist at the University of New Hampshire, goes further. *Foster's Daily Democrat* reports that Burger thinks EEE in the Northeast is "here to stay." But given the big holes in our understanding of the virus, no one can say for sure.

Understanding EEE

EEE is a rare, mosquito-borne viral disease that occurs in the eastern half of the United States. The virus that causes EEE is passed between mosquitoes and birds. Humans and other mammals can become infected with the virus when bitten by an infected mosquito. Mammals are a dead-end for the virus, however, as one mammal can't infect another with the virus, nor can they pass the virus to an uninfected mosquito.

About 96% of the people who become infected with the EEE virus fight it off, perhaps experiencing mild flu-like symptoms as they do so. Having fought off the virus, they are thereafter immune to the ill-effects of the virus, probably for the rest of their lives.

The other 4% of people who become infected with the virus are unable to fight it off. They develop EEE (the disease), a very serious infection of the central nervous system.

About a third of the people who de-

velop EEE (the disease) will recover fully and will thereafter be immune to the EEE virus. Another third will recover but will suffer permanent, sometimes debilitating, damage to the nervous system.

The final third will not survive the disease and will die, usually within a matter of days. People over age 50 and under age 15 seem to be at greatest risk, but one of the fatalities in New Hampshire so far this year was a healthy 20-year-old woman from Newton.

Personal Response

The odds of someone infected with the EEE virus getting EEE (the disease) are about 4%. The odds of someone who is not infected with the EEE virus getting EEE (the disease) are exactly zero – it simply can't happen. So clearly, the smartest thing is to avoid becoming infected with the virus.

The most common way of becoming infected with the EEE virus is by being bitten by a mosquito that carries the virus. At this time of year, and with one EEE-positive bird and two positive "pools" in Andover, the prudent assumption to make is that all mosquitoes carry the virus. That's probably not true, but since there's no easy way to tell which mosquitoes do and which don't carry the virus, the safe assumption to make is that they all do.

So to reduce your chances of getting EEE (the disease) to zero, you have to reduce your chances of getting bitten by a mosquito to zero. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Ser-

vices has published guidelines to that effect (see the sidebar "Avoiding EEE") that everyone should be following.

Public Response

The Town of Andover, as well as Andover Elementary/Middle School and Proctor Academy, are taking the threat of EEE very seriously. The most often-discussed responses to this threat are education and spraying.

Because EEE is so avoidable, education is perhaps the most important response. If you are not sure how to protect yourself from mosquito bites, please contact Town officials right away for a DHHS pamphlet on the subject. It's not difficult, and it's the only 100% effective protection against EEE.

Another important public response that requires education is to reduce accidental breeding grounds for mosquitoes. These are simple steps (see the sidebar "Avoiding EEE") that everyone can take to keep themselves and the whole community safer.

Spraying is another response that re-

ceives a lot of attention. For urban areas and some suburban areas, where mosquito breeding grounds are relatively small, well-defined, and accessible, spraying can be effective if the community is willing to bear the significant cost and the chemical dangers.

In Andover, there are questions about the appropriateness of spraying. Because of the extensive wetlands throughout town, complete eradication of mosquitoes is certainly not practical and may well be impossible. The cost of spraying is another barrier, as a program of spraying can easily reach into the tens of thousands of dollars. And with any extensive use of chemicals, there are environmental and personal health and safety issues to think about as well.

Fortunately, killing frosts put a stop to most mosquito activity, so this year's risk will be gone soon. That will give the community a welcome breather from the EEE threat and a few months to think carefully about how best to protect ourselves in 2006.

Avoiding EEE

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Services

Protect yourself from mosquito bites

- If outside during evening, nighttime, and dawn hours when mosquitoes are most likely to bite, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks.
- Use an effective insect repellent containing DEET (10% or less for children, no more than 30% for adults), Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Children should not apply DEET to themselves.
- Vitamin B, ultrasonic devices, incense, and bug zappers have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.

Eliminate mosquito breeding locations

- Remove old tires from your property.
- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or other containers. Don't overlook containers that have become overgrown by aquatic vegetation.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outside.
- Be sure roof gutters are clean and draining properly.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered and keep covers free of standing water.
- Aerate garden ponds or stock them with fish.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and wading pools.
- Change water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their properties.

Keep your home mosquito-free.

- Be sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens with no tears or holes.
- Use sweeping motions under beds, behind bedside tables, etc. to flush out resting mosquitoes.

For more information about EEE, call the DHHS Communicable Disease Control Section at 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 x4496.



NEW LONDON INN

Beginning September 22, The New London Inn will offer its **"Thursday's Child"** dinners to benefit local charitable organizations.

Simply come to the Inn on a Thursday night, order off the menu, and know that 50 percent of that night's profits will go to charity. All you need to do is make a reservation ...and have a good time!

"Thursday's Child" beneficiaries:

- September 22:** The New London Barn Playhouse
- September 29:** Kearsarge Assets Network
- October 6:** Upper Valley Humane Society
- October 13:** New London Hospital's ABC's Day Care
- October 20:** Wilmot Community Association
- October 27:** Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust
- November 3:** Kearsarge Area Council on Aging
- November 10:** Closed For Vacation
- November 17:** Abbott Library in Sunapee
- November 24:** Thanksgiving
- December 1:** Lake Sunapee Region Visiting Nurse Association



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www.newlondoninn.us

"Thursday's Child has far to go...."

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