

## **Patricia D. Hastings**

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**To:** "NJinPAS Mosquito" <NJinPASmosquito@AESOP.RUTGERS.EDU>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 23, 2003 2:43 PM  
**Subject:** New Jersey: Child Hospitalized After Eastern Equine Encephalitis Infection

*Courtesy of Audrey E. Moore, USEPA Region 2 Regional Ag Policy Specialist*

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New Jersey: Child Hospitalized After Encephalitis Infection

A 2-year-old Burlington County girl is undergoing treatment for severe neurological damage after becoming the **1st person in New Jersey to be infected with eastern equine encephalitis in nearly 20 years**. The girl was hospitalized on 28 Aug 2003 after developing a fever, seizures, and other symptoms 5 days earlier, **state health officials announced on Tue 21 Oct 2003**. Doctors diagnosed her with encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, and later tests by the Centers for Disease Control confirmed the infection was eastern equine encephalitis, state Health and Senior Services Commissioner Clifton R. Lacy said.

The victim is the 11th reported eastern equine encephalitis case in the United States in 2003, but the 1st in New Jersey since 1984. "The reappearance of eastern equine encephalitis infection in humans in New Jersey, with its serious neurological consequences, serves a powerful reminder of the importance of avoiding mosquito bites, even late in the season," Lacy said.

Eastern equine encephalitis infections are rare but pose a significantly higher risk of death than West Nile virus infection, health officials said. About 35 percent of people infected die, according to a CDC fact sheet. Symptoms range from flu-like illness, to inflammation of the brain, coma, and death. About 35 percent of those who survive subsequently experience mild to severe neurological problems.

There is no licensed vaccine for the disease or effective drugs to treat it, according to the CDC. People who spend time outdoors are most likely to contract the disease. Those over age 50 or under 15 tend to be most at risk for severe infection. There have been about 200 confirmed cases nationwide since the disease was first diagnosed in the United States in 1964. States with the largest number of cases are Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.

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[An equine case of eastern equine encephalitis was reported in New Jersey in August of 2003. The ecology of eastern equine encephalitis virus in New Jersey in relation to risk of human virus infection has been discussed by Henry Rupp in ProMED-mail previously; see: "Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (Northeast): alert 20030722.1792". - Mod.CP]

[see also:  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, equine - USA (NJ) 20030821.2103  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (AL): susp. 20030808.1962

Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (Florida) 20030720.1776  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (GA) (02) 20030725.1818  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (Georgia) 20030624.1549  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (Illinois) 20030717.1757  
 Eastern equine encephalitis, human - USA (VA) 20030929.2455  
 Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (Northeast): alert 20030722.1792  
 Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (Southeast) (04) 20030721.1785  
 Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (Southeast): ALERT 20030708.1674  
 Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (VA) 20030710.1690

2002

Eastern equine enceph., equine - USA (RI) 20020825.5138

Eastern equine encephalitis - USA (Florida) 20020528.4342

2000

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East. equine enceph., horses - USA (SC) 20001004.1711

East. equine enceph., horse - USA (New Jersey) 20000906.1529

East. equine enceph., surveillance - USA (Virginia) 20000812.1342

East. equine encephalitis, horses - USA (Virginia) (02) 20000803.1298

East. equine encephalitis, horses - USA (Virginia) 20000802.1285]

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