

## Southeast Health District

"Keeping Communities Safe and Healthy"

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[www.SEHDph.org](http://www.SEHDph.org)



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Horses test positive for mosquito-borne illness; residents encouraged to take precautions

Eleven horses have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in the last two months within the Southeast Health District's 16-county area, public health officials with the Southeast Health District announced Friday. No human cases of EEE have been reported within the public health district.

EEE, commonly known as sleeping sickness in horses, is caused by a virus carried by infected mosquitoes. EEE is a type of encephalitis, a general term meaning an acute inflammation involving parts of the brain, spinal cord and meninges. The virus that causes EEE can be transmitted to humans and animals when they are bitten by infected mosquitoes. The virus is *not* transmitted from animal-to-animal, animal-to-human or human-to-human.

Since this is a virus, there is no specific treatment once the animal or the person develops encephalitis. There is a vaccine available to help prevent the development of EEE in horses, but there is *no* vaccine available for people.

The first symptoms of EEE are high fever (103° to 106°F), stiff neck, headache and lack of energy. These symptoms show two to 10 days after infection. Swelling of the brain, called encephalitis, is the most dangerous symptom. The disease progresses quickly.

"We urge residents to take the necessary precautions to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes," says Dr. Rosemarie Parks, SEHD medical director. "Mosquitoes are most active an hour before and after sunrise and sunset. Wearing appropriate clothing and insect repellent containing DEET® is encouraged to prevent bites."

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Appling  
Atkinson  
Bacon  
Brantley

Bulloch  
Candler  
Charlton  
Clinch

Coffee  
Evans  
Jeff Davis  
Pierce

Tattnall  
Toombs  
Ware  
Wayne

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A repellent containing DEET® should be used according to package instructions. Repellents with DEET® should not be used on infants, and children should only use repellents that contain less than 10 percent DEET®.

Counties in which horses have tested positive include: Appling (1), Atkinson (1), Brantley (2), Charlton (1), Coffee (1) and Wayne (5).

For more information about mosquito-borne illnesses, please go online to [www.sehdph.org](http://www.sehdph.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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