

A concern has been raised about PFAs in a certain pesticide used to kill mosquitoes carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a disease lethal to human beings. The Board of Health would like to share some information on this.

First, PFAs are not part of the pesticide formula: they are a contaminant introduced into the product by a means yet unknown. This question is under investigation by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. It is also unknown whether PFA contaminants have been present in the product for a long time or if the contamination is more recent. We anticipate, though we cannot confirm, that contaminated product will not be used in the future.

Second, this product has been used primarily in southeastern Massachusetts, where mosquitoes carrying EEE are widespread. To the best of our knowledge it has not been used in our region, and is unlikely to be used given the discovery of contamination. In any case, we have no reason to believe that spraying would be conducted in our area in the foreseeable future.

Third, at Annual Town Meeting in June, 2020, Shutesbury voted to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. The primary – and at present the only – service provided by the PVMCD is surveillance. Mosquitoes are trapped and tested weekly throughout the summer months to determine whether and where there are mosquitoes carrying the disease in our town. This surveillance will allow us to take early, targeted, environmentally responsible action when and if it is needed. Our objective is to monitor and manage the mosquito population so as to make spraying unnecessary. More information on the MCD may be found at [shutesbury.org/health](https://shutesbury.org/health).

Fourth, and we can't say this often enough, you need to be vigilant. There have been a few cases of EEE in western Massachusetts in recent years; and there are other dangerous mosquito-borne diseases. Eliminate breeding grounds on your property; keep mosquitoes from getting into the house; cover up during outside activities when mosquitoes are active. More details on this also at [shutesbury.org/health](https://shutesbury.org/health).