

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus is a problem wherever there are mosquitos.

The disease is thought to be spread when a mosquito bites an infected bird and then a person. It can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses and some other mammals.

While the West Nile Virus (WNV) is commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East, it is currently believed to be a seasonal epidemic in North America from summer into the fall. It is also related to St. Louis encephalitis virus.

Symptoms of WNV:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle ache
- Exhaustion
- Skin rash
- Swollen lymph glands
- In severe cases, Encephalitis, which can be fatal



When dealing with WNV, prevention is the best tactic.

- Avoid contact with mosquitos:
 - Be aware of peak mosquito hours: dawn and dusk.
 - Install or repair window and door screens.
 - Use mosquito repellent.
 - Wear clothing that can help reduce mosquito bites, i.e., long sleeved shirts, socks and pants.
- Prevent mosquito breeding:
 - Eliminate standing water where mosquitos can lay eggs, e.g., old tires, bottles and buckets where water can collect.
 - Clean out the mosquitos from places where you work and play.
- Support community-based mosquito (vector) control programs.

West Nile Virus statistics:

- The chance of becoming ill from a single mosquito bite remains low.
- The risk of severe illness and death is highest for people over 50 years old, although people of all ages can become ill.
- 80% of people infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.
- Of the 20% who do exhibit symptoms, the chance of severe symptoms only occurs in about one in 150 people.
- Symptoms can last for weeks.

Contact the local health department or the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for current and frequently updated CDC information regarding WNV.

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