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Know about West Nile Virus

West Nile virus (WNV) now is present in most of the United States. Generally, WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with the virus when they feed on infected birds.

Adults are at the highest risk

People over age 50 have the highest risk of becoming seriously ill when they get infected with WNV. But, people of all ages can become ill.

Prevent serious disease

WNV affects the central nervous system and can be very serious. Some people who get infected with WNV develop a polio-like paralysis or severe diseases, such as West Nile encephalitis and West Nile meningitis—inflammation of the brain or the area around the brain. These severe diseases usually require hospitalization and can be life-altering, even fatal.

However, most people who get infected with WNV do not have any symptoms. Some people develop a less severe illness called, "West Nile fever." This illness usually goes away and generally does not require medical treatment.

WNV SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of severe illness include:

- Severe headache
- High fever
- Stiff neck
- Mental confusion
- Muscle weakness
- Tremors (shaking)
- Coma
- Paralysis

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU DEVELOP ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS.

Arkansas Department of Health

Keeping Your Hometown Healthy

Questions? Check with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information on West Nile Virus:
www.cdc.gov/westnile

For information about prevention of West Nile Virus:
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/prevention.htm

For information about repellent use and safety:
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm

For information about reporting dead birds:
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm

WEST NILE VIRUS

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

1. Avoid mosquito bites
2. Clean up breeding sites
3. Help your community

FIGHT THE BITE

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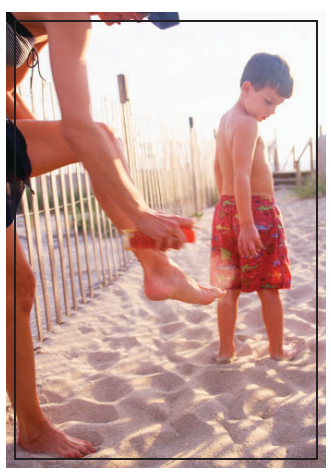
Prevention: Three Steps Can Reduce Your Risk

Fighting mosquito bites reduces your risk of getting WNV, along with other diseases that mosquitoes carry.

1. PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST MOSQUITO BITES

Use Repellent: Apply insect repellent to exposed skin when you go outdoors. The U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) has registered several active ingredients for use in repellents that can be applied to skin and clothing. Look for these ingredients on product labels, including:

- DEET (N, N-dietyl-m-toluamide)
- Picaridin (KBR 3023)
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (p-menthane 3,8-diol)
- Permethrin (use on clothing, shoes, bed nets, camping gear, but not skin)



Always Follow Repellent Label Instructions: Re-apply repellent if you feel mosquitoes starting to bite. Repellents containing DEET and picaridin may be used for adults and children older than two months of age. Oil of lemon eucalyptus may be used for children age three and above. Don't put repellent on children's hands because it may get in their mouth or eyes. And only use permethrin on clothes or camping gear, not directly on your skin.

Cover Up: Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with a repellent will provide extra protection. Do not spray repellent containing DEET on the skin underneath your clothing.

Avoid Mosquitoes: Many mosquitoes bite between dusk and dawn. Be especially sure to use repellents and protective clothing or limit your time outdoors during these hours.

Mosquito-proof your home: Keep mosquitoes outside by fixing or installing window and door screens.

2. CLEAN OUT MOSQUITO BREEDING SITES

Drain standing water: Don't give mosquitoes a place to breed. A small amount of standing water can be enough for a mosquito to lay her eggs.

Clean up: Look around for possible mosquito-breeding places. Be sure to empty water from buckets, cans, pool covers, flowerpots, and other items. Throw away or cover up stored tires or items that aren't being used. Clean pet water bowls weekly. Check if rain gutters are clogged. If you store water outside or have a well, make sure it's covered up. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.

3. HELP YOUR COMMUNITY CONTROL MOSQUITOES

Report Dead Birds: Dead birds may be a sign that WNV is infecting birds and mosquitoes in your area. But remember, birds die from many causes other than WNV. Check with local or state health departments to find out their policy for reporting dead birds. By reporting dead birds you can play an important role in monitoring WNV. Support your community's mosquito control program. If none exists, ask about starting one.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/westnile or call the CDC public response hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-888-232-6348 (TTY).

FIGHT THE BITE