



Fight the Bite



West Nile virus was first isolated from a febrile adult woman in the West Nile District of Uganda in 1937. The virus became recognized as a cause of severe human meningitis or encephalitis (inflammation of the spinal cord *and* brain) in elderly patients during an outbreak in Israel in 1957. WNV first appeared in North America in 1999, with encephalitis reported in humans and horses. In the U.S. since 1999, WNV human, bird, veterinary or mosquito activities have been reported from all states except Hawaii and Alaska.

As of May 30, 2006 avian, animal or mosquito WNV infections have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control from the following states: Arkansas, California, Florida, Missouri, Texas, and West Virginia. Human cases have been reported in Mississippi and Texas.

What Can I Do to Prevent WNV?

The easiest and best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites.

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an [EPA-registered active ingredient](#). Follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

What Are the Symptoms of WNV?

- **Serious Symptoms in a Few People.** About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.
- **Milder Symptoms in Some People.** Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.
- **No Symptoms in Most People.** Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

How Soon Do Infected People Get Sick?

People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

How Is WNV Infection Treated?

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In cases with milder symptoms, people experience symptoms such as fever and aches that pass on their own, although even healthy people have become sick for several weeks. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital where they can receive supportive treatment including intravenous fluids, help with breathing and nursing care.

What Should I Do if I Think I Have WNV?

Milder WNV illness improves on its own, and people do not necessarily need to seek medical attention for this infection though they may choose to do so. If you develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately. Severe WNV illness usually requires hospitalization. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are encouraged to talk to their doctor if they develop symptoms that could be WNV.

For additional information check out these links:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/prevention_info.htm

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/WNVmyths.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/mosquitorepellent.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/westnile/recout.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/posters.htm>