

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a type of encephalitis that is caused by a virus. Encephalitis is a disease that can cause the brain to swell. It was first found in the Uganda district in 1937 and in the Summer of 1999 in the U.S.A.

How is West Nile virus transmitted?

Mosquitoes draw the virus from infected birds and transmit it to animals and humans through bites. West Nile virus is not transmitted directly from person to person, animal to person, person to animal, or animal to animal.

What is the risk of a person contracting West Nile virus?

The risk of becoming ill from a single mosquito bite is extremely low. In areas where mosquitoes carry the virus, less than 1% of the mosquitoes are actually infected. Even if mosquitoes are infected, less than 1% of people bitten and infected by those mosquitoes become severely ill.

How is the West Nile Virus Diagnosed and What Medical Treatment is administered?

The West Nile Virus is diagnosed after evaluating the patient's symptoms, the results of the blood test and studying the number of times the patient has been exposed to the West Nile Virus. The treatment for diseases caused by a virus consist of providing support to the patient such as hospitalization, intravenous fluid, artificial respiration, and prevention of infections until the individual's immune system responds to the infection.

What clinical signs are associated with West Nile virus infection?

Humans: Most infections in humans are relatively mild, with flu-like symptoms including fever, headache, body aches and, in some cases, skin rash and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms will appear 3 to 14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Signs of more severe infections include high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, convulsions and paralysis. Death rates associated with severe infection range from 3% to 15% and are highest among the elderly and infants.

Horses: The most common sign is weakness, usually in the hindquarters. Weakness may be indicated by a widened stance, stumbling, leaning to one side and toe-dragging. In extreme cases, paralysis may follow. Fever is sometimes evident, as are depression and fearfulness.

Other animals: Wild birds infected with West Nile virus in the United States are most often found dead; therefore, descriptions of clinical signs in wild birds are not readily available.

How Can You Protect Yourself from Getting Infected with West Nile Virus?

- During warm months, avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn.
- If you must be outdoors during hours when mosquitoes are most active, cover up with shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin and spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or 35% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. When using insecticides or insect repellents, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use.

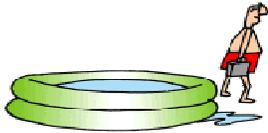
How can you reduce mosquito breeding around your home and neighborhood?

- Check the integrity of screens around your home, porch and patio.
- Eliminate stagnant water from any receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed such as: metal or plastic containers, flower pots or any other receptacle around your property that collects water, especially tires.

- Pay attention especially to tires on your property that can collect water



- Clean rain gutters, remove tree leaves that might not allow rain water to drain
- Maintain all swimming pools appropriately treated and remove any standing water from culverts.
- Invert all inflatable plastic pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.



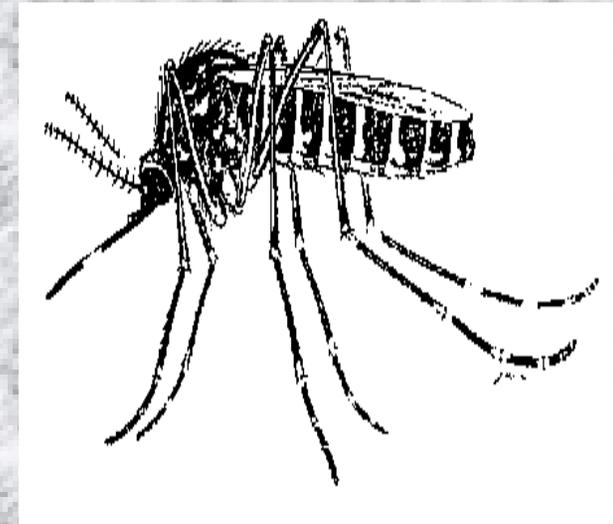
- Maintain bird baths and ponds clean and remove all stagnant water.
- Use landscape as a way to prevent accumulation of stagnant water.



- Make holes on the bottom recycling receptacles outside your home to allow the water to drain.



What you should know about the West Nile Virus



**CITY OF EL PASO
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