

WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

It is a virus that has commonly been found in humans, birds, and other animals in Africa, Eastern Europe, West Asia and the Middle East and is spread through the bite from an infected mosquito. Scientists now believe this virus has been present in the United States since the summer of 1999.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS?

Most people who contract West Nile Virus will not feel sick. Approximately 20% of those infected will develop mild symptoms including fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands generally lasting a few days. In rare cases, the infection can affect the spinal cord or cause swelling of the brain (encephalitis) and lead to death.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS?

You should contact your health care provider immediately. You and your doctor will discuss your medical history, and if it is determined you are at high risk and are



showing signs of West Nile infection, a blood sample will be drawn and sent to a laboratory for testing.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR WEST NILE VIRUS?

There is no specific treatment for West Nile Virus. However, severe cases often result in hospitalization to provide intravenous fluids and respiratory support and to prevent secondary infections including pneumonia and urinary tract infections.



AM I OR MY FAMILY AT RISK?

Anyone living in an area where the virus has been detected is at risk. However, people over the age of 50 have the greatest risk of developing severe disease. West Nile Virus was documented in Missouri in 2001. However, less than 1% of mosquitoes were found to be infected with West Nile Virus and less than 1% of humans bitten by an infected mosquito will become seriously ill. In fact, you are 1000 times more likely to die from a car accident than from West Nile Virus.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF?

One of the best ways to prevent West Nile Virus is to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds and their habitat. Since mosquitoes are drawn to stagnant or standing water, these areas can be eliminated by:

Emptying standing water in old tires, cemetery urns, buckets, plastic covers, tarps, toys or any other container where water pools.



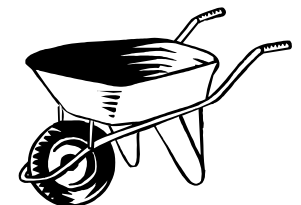
Empty and change the water in birdbaths, fountains, wading pools, rain barrels or potted plant trays at least once a week.



Drain or fill temporary pools with dirt or turn upside down when not in use.

Keep swimming pools treated and circulating and rain gutters free of debris.

Replace your outdoor lights with yellow "bug lights."



IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO TO PROTECT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF?

Yes. Along with habitat elimination, everyone should also reduce personal exposure.

- ▶ Wear long-sleeves and pants outdoors whenever possible.
- ▶ Avoid being outdoors at dawn, dusk and early evening when mosquitoes are actively feeding.
- ▶ Place mosquito netting over infant carriers and strollers when outdoors.
- ▶ Install or repair window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.
- ▶ Apply insect repellent containing DEET on exposed skin and clothing following manufacturer's directions.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Springfield - Greene County Health Department
227 E. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, Mo.
65802 (417) 864-1658 Fax (417) 864-1099

www.springfieldmogov.org/health

or

www.westnilefilespringfield.org

Missouri Department of Health

www.health.state.mo.us

St. Louis Area

(Serving St. Louis City, and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin)

www.health.org/docs/wnv/index.html

Kansas City Health Department

www.kcmo.org/health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

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West Nile Virus

THE FACTS



