



West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a viral disease that has emerged in temperate regions of North America and presents a threat to both public and animal health. WNV has become established as a seasonal disease that flares up in the summer months and continues into the fall.

Transmission

- WNV seems to be spread most commonly to humans through the bite of a mosquito that has fed on infected animals.
- WNV also can be spread through blood transfusions or from mother to child.
- WNV is not spread through casual contact with people.

Symptoms

- Approximately 80% of those infected never show any symptoms.
- Approximately 20% of those infected experience only mild symptoms for a few days:
 - » Fever
 - » Vomiting
 - » Headache
 - » Swollen lymph nodes
 - » Body aches
 - » Skin rash
 - » Nausea
- Less than 1% of those infected with WNV develops serious symptoms that may last several weeks:
 - » High fever
 - » Convulsions
 - » Headache
 - » Muscle weakness
 - » Neck stiffness
 - » Vision loss
 - » Stupor
 - » Numbness
 - » Disorientation
 - » Paralysis
 - » Coma
 - » Permanent neurological damage
 - » Tremors
- If symptoms develop, it is typically between 3 to 14 days after an individual is bitten by an infected mosquito.

Treatment

- If you experience any symptoms, contact your physician.
- No vaccine or specific antiviral treatments for WNV infection are available.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers can be used to reduce fever and relieve some symptoms.

Prevention

The best way to avoid WNV is to avoid mosquitoes:

- Wear insect repellent on any exposed skin when outside.
- Try to wear long sleeves, pants, and socks—clothing can protect from mosquitoes.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours in your area.
- Drain standing water to prevent mosquitoes from multiplying.
- Maintain screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—
 - » www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/prevention.htm
 - » http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/resources/pdfs/wnvFactsheet_508.pdf

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