

West Nile Virus

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito borne disease that causes encephalitis and meningitis in both humans and some animals. This is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the continental United States. Cases occur during the summer and continue through the fall which coincides with the mosquito season. About 1 out of 150 infected people develop a serious, sometimes fatal illness.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Most people do not develop. For those that do show symptoms, they last as short as a few days' or up to several weeks. For those who show symptoms, they will typically see the following:

- Headaches
- Fever
- Body aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Swollen lymph glands
- Skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back.

Severe illness may occur in other infected individuals (makes up less than 1% of cases). The following are symptoms that they show:

- High fever
- Headache
- Neck stiffness
- Disorientation
- Coma
- Convulsions
- Muscle weakness
- Vision loss
- Paralysis
- Meningitis
- Encephalitis

How does it spread?

- WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infectious when they feed on infected birds. These mosquitoes can spread WNV to both animals and humans.
- WNV is not spread through direct contact like touching someone with the virus.

How is it treated?

- There is no specific vaccine or treatment for WNV. Typically for those with mild symptoms like a fever or aches they tend to clear up on their own. In the more severe cases, these individuals need medical assistance and receive IV fluids, help with breathing, and nursing care.

Prevention:

- Use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient
- If you go outdoors during dusk or dawn (when mosquitoes are more active) be sure to wear long sleeves and pants or consider staying indoors during this time.
- Remove and empty standing water from flowerpots and buckets around your home.

For more information:

Visit the CDC here: [West Nile Virus - CDC Resource](#)



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This fact sheet is for information purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional.