



West Nile Virus

What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus is a virus mainly transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes transmit the virus after becoming infected by feeding on the blood of birds which carry the virus.

Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms or they have flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, body aches and fatigue. Sometimes though, the virus can cause severe illness, resulting in hospitalization and even death. Symptoms usually develop between two and 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

While anyone can become infected with West Nile virus, the risk of severe illness increases with age. The risk of becoming infected is greatest during mosquito season. In Canada, this can start as early as mid-April and last until the first hard frost in late September or October.

How to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites and West Nile virus

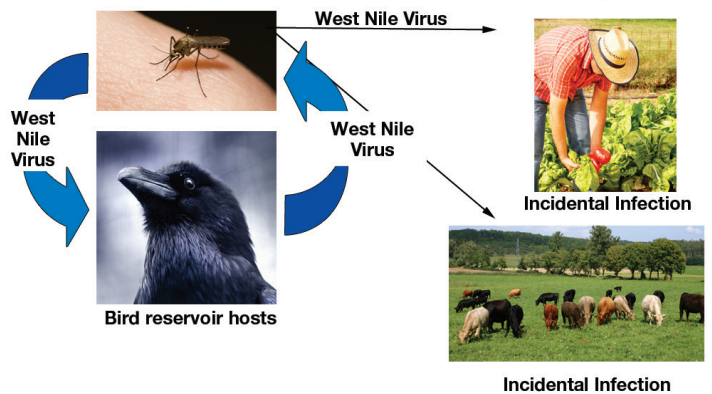
Use insect repellent when outdoors.

- Choose an insect repellent that contains DEET or other approved ingredients.
- The concentration of DEET should be no greater than 30% for adults, no greater than 10% for children, and should not be used on children under six months old.
- Always read the label directions prior to usage.

Cover up.

- Wear light-coloured clothing, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and a hat to go outside when mosquitoes are most active.
- Minimize your time outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- If it's particularly bad out there and you need to be out for a long time, consider specialized bug-protective clothing.

West Nile Virus Transmission Cycle



Top ten mosquito breeding sites

1. Bird baths
2. Old tires
3. Unused containers like barrels
4. Flower pot saucers
5. Swimming pool covers
6. Wading pools
7. Clogged gutters and eavestroughs
8. Clogged drainage ditches
9. Small containers like cans or bottle tops
10. Unused children's toys or vehicles.

Clean up and ruin a mosquito's love life.

- Unlike birds and other insects, most mosquitoes do not fly very far and tend to stay close to their breeding sites and normal habitat.
- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water – even small amounts. The life cycle from egg to adult can take less than 10 days.
- Get rid of as much standing water as you can from around your home and property. Drain water from flower pots, wading pools, old tires and so on. Change water in bird-baths and pet bowls twice a week.
- Make sure door and window screens fit tightly and are free of holes.

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