



WEST NILE VIRUS



Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is West Nile Virus?**

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne infection that can cause serious illness. Although chances of a person getting sick are small, there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

2. **What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus?**

Mild cases of West Nile infections may include a slight fever and/or headache. More severe cases are marked by a rapid onset of high fever and body aches, disorientation, tremors, convulsions and in most severe cases paralysis or death. Usually symptoms occur 5 to 15 days after exposure. There is no treatment for viral infections other than to treat symptoms and provide supportive care.

3. **Who is High Risk For Becoming Seriously Ill?**

Persons who are at the highest risk for serious illness are persons over the age of 50. Healthy children and adults are at very low risk for infection.

4. **Do All Mosquitoes Transmit Disease?**

No. Most mosquitoes do not transmit disease. There are about 65 different species of mosquitoes.

5. **Where Do Mosquitoes Live and Breed?**

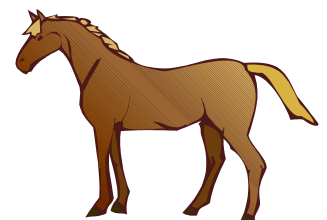
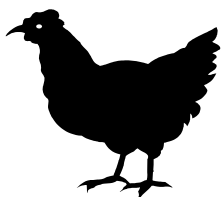
Mosquitoes lay their eggs in moist areas, such as standing water. The eggs become larva that remains in the water until the adults fly off. Weeds, tall grass and shrubbery provide an outdoor home for adult mosquitoes. They can also enter houses through unscreened windows or doors, or broken screens. Many mosquitoes will breed in containers that hold water, such as flowerpots or discarded tires.

6. **When Are Mosquitoes Most Active?**

Some mosquitoes are most active between dusk and dawn, when the air is calm. However others feed at any time of the day.

7. **Can my Pet Be Infected?**

West Nile Virus has been confirmed in some domestic animals, including pet birds, dogs and cats. Horses can become seriously ill if infected. It is important to remember that birds and animals cannot transmit West Nile Virus to people.



8. How Can I protect My Family and Myself?

To reduce the mosquito population around your home and property, reduce or eliminate all standing water.

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water holding containers.
- Remove all discarded tires on your property. Used tires are very significant mosquito breeding sites.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutter drain properly and clean gutters in the spring and fall.
- Remove leaf debris.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths
- Clean vegetation and debris from edges of ponds
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property

9. Should We Stay Indoors?

It is not necessary to limit any outdoor activities. However you can and should try to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes. In addition to reducing standing water in your yard, make sure all windows and doors have screens and that all screens are in good repair. If west Nile Virus is found in your area:

- Wear shoes, socks, long –sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellent containing DEET according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors when mosquitoes are biting.

10. What Else Can We Do?

Remember The 5 “D’s”

-DEET

-DRAIN

-DUSK TO DAWN

-DRESS

For More Information contact the
Volusia County Health Department
Environmental Health Dept. at (386) 274-0692
Epidemiology Dept. at (386) 274-0646
AFTER HOURS PAGER: 820-0012

Visit the following websites for more West Nile Virus Information

<http://www.tallytown.com/redcrossmyflorida.com>