



# West Nile Virus

## What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus Infection?

If any symptoms appear, they generally occur within the first 15 days after exposure. If you think you may have symptoms, contact your health-care provider.

### Milder Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Skin rash
- Swollen lymph glands

### Severe Symptoms may include:

- High fever
- Headache
- Neck stiffness
- Disorientation
- Paralysis

**Anyone can get West Nile Virus Infection. However, people over 50 years of age and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk for severe illness.**



## What is the treatment for West Nile Virus Infection?

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for West Nile Virus Infection. Most people fully recover from the virus on their own, but severe cases may require hospitalization.

**SUMMER IS WEST NILE VIRUS SEASON. PROTECT YOURSELF. TAKE PRECAUTIONS.**

**Avoid outdoor activities during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.**

### Wear insect repellent with DEET:

- Use only enough repellent to cover exposed skin, and do not apply to skin that is under clothing.
- Do not apply repellent to cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not apply repellent to children's hands.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.

### Get rid of standing water where mosquitoes breed:

- Dispose of old tires, cans, planters and other containers that can hold water.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of containers or tires left outside to allow drainage.
- Frequently change water in birdbaths.
- Clean clogged gutters.



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Department of Health & Wellness

# "FIGHT THE BITE"

**PROTECTING YOURSELF, FAMILY, AND NEIGHBORS AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS**



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# West Nile Virus

## What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord).

## How is West Nile Virus Spread?

Mosquitoes acquire the virus from feeding on infected birds. The virus is transmitted when the infected mosquito then bites people, other birds, and animals.

**West Nile Virus is not spread by person-to-person contact.**

The virus can spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn child. In a small number of cases, the virus has also been shown to spread through breast milk, blood transfusions, and organ transplants.



## Why do mosquitoes bite?

There are over 3500 known species of mosquitoes identified throughout the world, and approximately 50 different species found in Nebraska. While principally nectar feeders, the female mosquitoes also require a high-protein meal of blood to aid in egg development.

## How do I prevent mosquito bites?

- Avoid outdoor activities during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeves, pants, and shoes with socks.
- Avoid wearing products containing fragrances, such as soap, shampoo, lotion, and hairspray.
- Stay away from stagnant or slow moving water often found in creeks and streams.
- Install or repair screens on doors and windows.
- Wear enough mosquito repellent to cover exposed skin. Repellent containing DEET offers the best protection from insect bites. Non-DEET alternatives include compounds containing picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow all label directions exactly.

## Where do mosquitoes breed?

The most effective way to protect your family from mosquitoes is to eliminate potential breeding grounds. Mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in stagnant or slow moving water in shady areas. Mosquitoes may lay eggs in this type of water that lasts for more than four days.



## How do I prevent mosquito breeding?

- Change the water in birdbaths, fountains, and wading pools at least once a week.
- Repair leaks or clear away puddles from around faucets and window air conditioning units.
- Dispose of old tires, cans, bottles, jars, buckets, planters and other containers that can hold standing water. To promote proper drainage, drill holes in the bottoms of any containers left outdoors.
- Ensure that rain gutters are cleaned out frequently.
- Keep hedges and bushes trimmed to reduce shade. Mow the lawn at least once a week. Mosquitoes can hide in the shade of tall grass and bushes.