

City of Keene

WEST NILE VIRUS

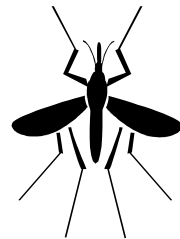
IT'S NOT A MUMMY'S TALE



City of Keene

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What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus is a virus that lives in birds and is transmitted to people by mosquitoes and was, previously only found in Africa, Eastern Europe and West Asia. Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain and can be caused by either head injury, bacterial infections, or, most commonly, viral infections.

How do people get the virus?

People are infected from the bite of a certain kind of mosquito, specifically an infected *Northern House Mosquito*. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite, or take a blood meal, from birds infected with the West Nile virus. Infected mosquitoes then transmit the virus to people and other animals when taking a blood meal.



The Villain of West Nile Virus

What are the symptoms?

The vast majority of people may not develop symptoms at all. When they do, most cases are mild infections and include fever, headache, and body aches, often with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. Only a handful of those ill symptoms can be severe, including headache, high fever, neck

stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, occasional convulsions, and paralysis.

Is there treatment?

There is no specific therapy. In more severe cases, hospitalization and intensive supportive therapy may be needed.

Is there a vaccine?

There is no vaccine for West Nile encephalitis.

What is New Hampshire doing to prevent a West Nile virus outbreak?

Several state agencies, local governments and health professionals are implementing a plan to find and control the kind of mosquitoes known to carry the virus. They are testing animal populations that may act as a host for the virus and monitor public health to provide early warning of virus infections.

Is the virus in New Hampshire?

Yes. There have been 7 cases of West Nile virus isolated from birds as of November 24, 2000.

How could the virus get here?

The West Nile Virus may have entered the United States in infected mosquitoes, birds or people.

Can you get the virus directly from birds or other insects?

Current information shows that the only mechanism of transmission is through infected mosquitoes.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period of a West Nile Virus infection is usually five to fifteen days.

Do infected birds naturally die or become ill?

In the 1999 outbreak and with the current information for year 2000, large numbers of North American crows were observed becoming seriously ill and dying. Other species, such as chickens or exotic species at zoos, can get the infection but usually don't die because of it.

Can other animals get sick?

Last year in New York City, sick and dead cats, crows and horses were laboratory confirmed as being infected with the virus. In addition, dogs, many other species of wild birds, and many species of domestic birds (chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys) while not clinically ill were tested positive for the virus antibodies, thereby, demonstrating they had been infected.

Will the virus survive over winter?

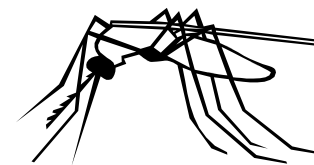
Yes. Infected mosquitoes, which routinely successfully hibernate over winter in sheltered areas, could emerge in the spring and further continue the spread of the virus. Adult mosquitoes, eggs and larvae normally survive successfully over winter as part of their two-year life cycle. Therefore, the majority of infected mosquitoes from this outbreak should be expected to survive this winter.

How can I reduce the number of mosquitoes around the home and neighborhood?

- Reduce the amount of standing water available for mosquito breeding.
- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property. Do not overlook containers that have become overgrown by aquatic vegetation.
- Recycle discarded tires. Used tires have become the most important domestic mosquito producer in this country.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors. Drainage holes that are located on the sides collect enough water for mosquitoes to breed in.
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains. Roof gutters are easily overlooked but can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use. A wading pool becomes a mosquito producer if it is not used on a regular basis.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and change water in bird baths at least twice weekly. Both provide breeding habitat for domestic mosquitoes.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. Water gardens are fashionable, but become major mosquito producers if they are allowed to stagnate.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. A pool that is left untended for a month can produce enough mosquitoes to result in neighborhood-wide complaints.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property. Mosquitoes will develop in any puddle that lasts more than 4 days.

How can I reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes?

- Stay indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin. An effective repellent will contain 35% DEET (N, Ndiethyl-meta-toluamide). DEET in high concentrations (greater than 35%) provides no additional protection.
- There are products available for children containing 7-14% DEET that are safe for children and are effective.
- Repellents may irritate the eyes and mouth, and people should avoid applying repellent to the hands of children.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.
- Whenever you use an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product.
- NOTE: Vitamin B and "ultrasonic" devices are NOT effective in preventing mosquito bites.



Where can you get information?

Call the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at:

1-800-852-3345 ext. 4496

Or visit the Communicable Disease Control Website at:

www.cdc.gov

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