

West Nile Virus Fact Sheet



What is West Nile?

West Nile is a disease caused by a virus. In Ohio it can be spread in the summer and fall.

How does West Nile Spread?

Mosquitoes

- West Nile is mostly a disease of birds like crows and blue jays. Sometimes mosquitoes can pick up the disease from biting an infected bird. The bite of infected mosquitoes can spread West Nile to people and horses.

Blood Transfusions, Transplants and Mother to Child

- In rare cases, West Nile has spread from an infected blood donor or organ donor. Organs and blood donations are now screened for West Nile virus. There have been a few reports of West Nile spreading through breastfeeding or from mother to baby during pregnancy

Not by touching

- You cannot get West Nile virus from kissing, or touching a person who is sick.

How is West Nile treated?

There is no specific cure for West Nile.

In most mild cases, symptoms will go away on their own. People with severe cases usually need to go to the hospital for supportive care.

What are West Nile Symptoms?

- **80 % of infected people do not have any symptoms.**
- Symptoms of West Nile can include headache, fever, body ache, nausea, vomiting, a rash on the chest and back, swollen lymph glands. These can last for several days to several weeks.
- **1 in 150 infected people can develop severe symptoms** of headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, coma, muscle weakness, vision loss, and paralysis. This can last for several weeks, and the neurological effects can be permanent.

How long until symptoms appear?

Most people develop symptoms of West Nile between 3 days and two weeks after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

How can I prevent West Nile?

Use insect repellants when outdoors

- Repellents using DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are effective at repelling mosquitoes when used following the package directions.

Avoid outdoor activities at dawn or dusk.

- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors.

Empty standing water around your property.

Make sure windows and doors have screens