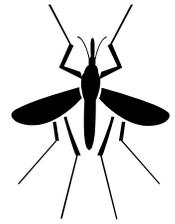


# WEST NILE VIRUS



*Are you and your family protected?*

## *What is it?*

West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted to humans and animals by an infected mosquito. It cannot be spread from person to person.



## *What are the symptoms?*

Most people who are infected with WNV have NO symptoms at all. However, if a person becomes ill, symptoms may be flu-like including:

- fever
- headache
- body aches



and sometimes skin rash and swollen lymph glands.

The onset of illness can occur from 3-15 days after an infected mosquito bite.

In rare cases, the infection can result in a severe illness known as encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. The risk of encephalitis is higher for persons over 50 years of age and those who are immunosuppressed.

Only a small number of cases have been fatal.



Dead birds in an area may mean that WNV is circulating between the birds and mosquitoes in that location. The public can play an important role in monitoring WNV by reporting dead birds. If you find a dead bird, do not touch the bird. Please call the **West Nile Virus Dead Bird Surveillance Program 1-877-968-2473**

## *Precautions*

Although WNV hasn't been detected in California as of May 2003, experts believe there may be cases in California this year. To reduce your risk:

- Stay indoors at dawn and early evening, which is peak mosquito biting time.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin when going outdoors. The most effective repellents contain DEET. Always read and follow the product directions.
- Repair or install window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out.



## *Avoid mosquito breeding*

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. To avoid helping mosquitoes breed in your environment, routinely check and eliminate any standing water in your yard. Change water weekly in birdbaths.



For more information visit us at [www.hsahealth.org](http://www.hsahealth.org) or call the Communicable Diseases Dept. 558-5678

