

West Nile Virus Transmission Cycle



Learn to identify mosquito larvae in standing water and then eliminate the breeding site.



Mosquito larvae, also known as “wrigglers” or “wigglers,” will develop to adults in any standing water, even in the smallest containers or depressions.

Prevention is the Best Policy!

Tips for controlling mosquitoes around your home

Eliminate any type of standing water outdoors

- Dispose of, turn upside down, or drill holes in tin cans, plastic containers, old flower-pots or similar water-holding containers. 
- Empty or drill holes in discarded tires. 
- Change water in birdbaths twice a week.
- Cover rainwater barrels with mesh or screens.
- Don't allow water to stand for more than 3 days.
- Clean, chlorinate, and circulate outdoor pools and hot tubs.
- Remove water that collects on pool covers.
- Turn over wading pools and wheelbarrows.
- Aerate ornamental pools, stock them with fish, or change water twice a week. 
- Clear leaves and twigs from eaves troughs, storm and roof gutters throughout the summer.
- Make sure drain ditches are not clogged.
- Check flat roofs frequently for standing water.
- Turn over compost frequently.
- Fill in low depressions in lawns.
- Clear out dense vegetation and eliminate decaying debris.
- Provide snug fitting screens, with no holes, for windows and doors.
- Point out potential mosquito breeding areas to your neighbours. 

Put the Bite on West Nile Virus

Health Protection Advice for Mosquito Season



It's that time of the year again!

Nice weather in British Columbia also means the start of mosquito season. Mosquitoes are usually just considered a nuisance, and bites are uncomfortable, but a small percentage cause infections that can lead to serious illnesses.

People who have chronic illnesses and the elderly are at greatest risk of serious illness.

Protect yourself and your family by eliminating mosquito breeding areas, covering up and avoiding mosquitoes.

The West Nile Virus

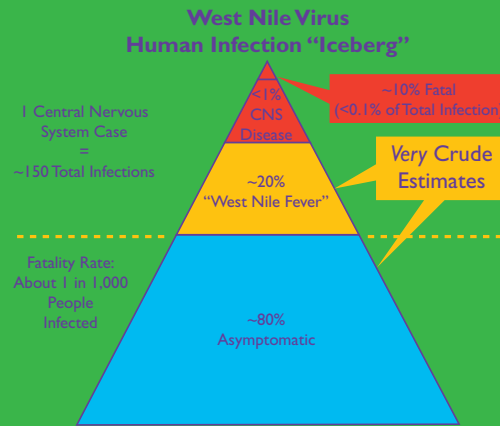
The West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus that, in rare situations, can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). The virus was named after the West Nile region of Uganda, where the virus first appeared in 1937. The risk of becoming seriously ill as a result of infection with West Nile Virus is low and most people who become infected experience no symptoms or have less serious illness.

How is the virus spread?

West Nile Virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by biting an infected bird. In addition, it appears that West Nile Virus can be transmitted through transplanted organs, blood transfusion and breast milk. The virus is not spread by direct person-to-person contact, or from animal to human. Canadian Blood Services screens donors for the virus. (Having the infection does not disqualify donors for more than two months, since the virus leaves the body eventually.)

What are the risks?

Infection of the central nervous system by West Nile Virus, however, can cause long lasting or permanent and debilitating side effects.



What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus infection?

In a small percentage of cases, West Nile Virus can be introduced through mosquito bites. Symptoms take 3 to 12 days or more to incubate. If you have any of the following symptoms, seek medical help right away:

- Ongoing fever
- Muscle weakness
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Severe headache
- Sudden sensitivity to light
- Extreme swelling or infection at the site of the mosquito bite

Find out more

For more information, or to report fresh dead crows, ravens, magpies, or jays, with no sign of injury, please call **1-866-300-0520**.

Interior Health is working with local governments to monitor for West Nile Virus and help prevent its spread. To find out more, please visit our website at

www.interiorhealth.ca

Protecting yourself

West Nile Virus has been found in mosquitoes that bite during the day as well as those that bite from dusk to dawn. Therefore, it is important to protect yourself any time you are outdoors by covering up and using insect repellent for extra protection.

Wear shoes, socks, hat, long pants and long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods, or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be lightly coloured, loose fitting, and made of tightly woven materials to prevent mosquitoes from biting through to your skin.

Use insect repellent

Consider using a personal insect repellent. Use only personal insect repellents that are registered in Canada, such as those that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), and be sure to follow the precautions on the label. Keep in mind that the percentage of DEET should not exceed 30% for adults or 10% for children. DEET should not be used on children under 6 months of age. Check the label for more detailed information or ask your family pharmacist for assistance.

