

West Nile Virus (WNV) Information from Bell County Public Health District

Humans can contract West Nile virus from a mosquito bite. People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito. WNV is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus. Pregnancy and nursing do not increase risk of becoming *infected with WNV*. People older than 50 have the highest risk of severe disease, and people with weakened immune systems are at an increased risk for West Nile virus. Infected mosquitoes get the virus from feeding on infected birds and mammals. The virus can cause serious illness or death.

Symptoms:

Serious Symptoms in a Few People. About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

Milder Symptoms in Some People. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.

No Symptoms in Most People. Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

There are no medications to treat or vaccines to prevent West Nile virus infection. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital where they can receive supportive treatment including intravenous fluids, help with breathing, and nursing care. If people have symptoms that cause them concern, they should contact their healthcare provider.

To reduce exposure to West Nile virus:

- 1. Use an approved insect repellent every time you go outside and follow the instructions on the label. Approved repellents are those that contain DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.**
- 2. Walk around your property to try to identify possible mosquito breeding places. Regularly drain standing water, including water collected in empty cans, tires, buckets, tarps over boats or other items, clogged rain gutters, and saucers under potted plants. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used. Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water.**
- 3. Wear long sleeves and pants at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.**
- 4. Use air conditioning or make sure there are screens on all doors and windows to keep mosquitoes from entering the home.**

For more information on West Nile virus, visit

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arboviral/westNile/>
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/wnv_factSheet.htm

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/spanish/wnv_factsheet_spanish.htm
For more information call 254-773-4457