

## **How do DEET and other repellents work?**

*Mosquitoes are attracted to hosts by skin odors and carbon dioxide. DEET and some other repellents jam the insect's sensors and confuse the insect so it is unable to land and bite the host successfully.*

## **How often should repellent be reapplied?**

*Follow the directions on the product you are using in order to determine how frequently you need to reapply repellent. DEET products will usually repel mosquitoes for several hours.*

## **Who should I contact if I find a dead bird?**

*If a dead crow or blue jay is found between May 1 and October 15 and appears to have died from natural causes, you should report this information to your local health department.*

*The Livingston County Health Department can be contacted at 815 844-7174.*

## **Suggestions for Personal Protection Measures and Reducing Mosquito Breeding Sites:**

- *Stay indoors at dawn, dusk and early evening. If outdoors at these times, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.*
- *Use mosquito repellent containing 25 percent to 35 percent DEET when it is necessary to be outdoors, applied sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the repellent label. Use lower concentrations, 10 percent or less, for children between the ages of 2 to 12. Consult a physician before using repellents on young children. After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.*
- *Eliminate stagnant water in bird baths, ponds, flower pots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.*
- *Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.*
- *Store boats covered or upside down, or remove rainwater weekly.*
- *If you have an ornamental water garden, stock it with mosquito-eating fish.*
- *Keep weeds and tall grass cut short.*
- *Check for and repair any tears in residential screens, including porches and patios.*

*Information contained in this brochure was adapted from materials published by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control*

# Frequently Asked Questions About West Nile Virus

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## **What is West Nile Virus?**

*West Nile encephalitis is a mosquito-borne infection of the brain caused by West Nile virus.*

## **How do people get West Nile encephalitis?**

*People get West Nile encephalitis from the bite of a mosquito (primarily the Culex group of species) that is infected with WNV. A mosquito becomes infected by biting a bird that carries the virus.*

## **What are the symptoms of West Nile encephalitis?**

*Most people who are infected have no symptoms or may experience mild illness, such as fever and headaches, before fully recovering. Symptoms generally occur three to 15 days following the bite of an infected mosquito and range from a slight fever, headache, rash, swollen nodes and conjunctivitis (irritation of the eye) to the rapid onset of a severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, coma or death.*

## **What percentage of WNV cases are fatal?**

*The case fatality rate ranges from 3 percent to 15 percent.*

## **Who is at risk of contracting West Nile encephalitis?**

*All residents in areas with WNV activity are at risk of getting West Nile encephalitis. Those at highest risk of severe disease are persons 50 years of age or older and those whose immune system are weakened by illness or medical treatment.*

## **How is encephalitis diagnosed and treated?**

*An arbovirus infection is usually diagnosed through a blood test. A follow-up blood test two or three weeks after the onset of symptoms is almost always necessary to confirm an arbovirus diagnosis.*

## **Is there a vaccine for West Nile encephalitis?**

*No human vaccine for West Nile virus encephalitis exists.*

## **Is West Nile virus transmitted by blood transfusion or organ donation?**

*A recent investigation has identified transplanted organs as the source of WNV infection in four recipients of organs from a single donor.*

## **Should people avoid donating blood or getting blood transfusions or organ transplants?**

*Blood is lifesaving and is currently in short supply. Donating blood is safe, and blood donation is encouraged now and in the future.*

## **Can West Nile virus be transmitted through breast milk?**

*It appears that West Nile virus can be transmitted through breast milk.*

## **Has West Nile virus been detected in Illinois?**

*West Nile virus was first identified in Illinois on Sept. 5, 2001. During the past two years, the virus has been identified in birds, mosquito pools, and horses.*

## **Have there been any human cases of West Nile encephalitis in Illinois?**

*Illinois reported its first human case of West Nile disease on August 6, 2002. At the end of 2002, Illinois led the nation with 884 cases and 64 deaths. In 2003, Illinois documented 54 human cases and 1 death. For additional information regarding current West Nile virus statistics, visit our website at [www.lchd.us](http://www.lchd.us).*

## **What time of the year are mosquito viruses spread?**

*Viruses are most likely to be spread during the warm weather months when mosquitoes are most active, usually beginning in the spring and lasting until the first hard frost.*

## **Can West Nile encephalitis be prevented?**

*The best way to prevent West Nile encephalitis is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites.*

## **Where do mosquitoes breed?**

*During the summer, mosquitoes can develop in any standing water that lasts for more than seven to ten days.*