

**What should I do if I think I have been infected with West Nile virus?**

Anyone who may be ill from WNV should see a doctor as soon as possible. Although there is no cure for the infection, most people who are infected with WNV have only mild symptoms, if any at all, and recover fully with supportive treatment.

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**What is North Carolina doing about West Nile virus?**

North Carolina has a well established history of managing other diseases carried by mosquitoes, such as Eastern Equine encephalitis and LaCrosse encephalitis. As it has done with these other viruses, North Carolina health officials will manage WNV through early detection, mosquito control and education.

If WNV poses a public health risk for an area, local and state public health officials will respond with appropriate mosquito control measures and encourage residents to follow personal protection strategies.

As always, communities and individuals should follow preventative steps to reduce mosquito breeding and protect themselves against bites.

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**NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Contact your local health department or the Public Health Pest Management Section at (919) 733-6407.

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Division of Environmental Health  
Public Health Pest Management Section  
<http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm/index.htm>

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# West Nile Virus



# What is it?

**What is West Nile Virus?** West Nile is a virus carried by mosquitoes that can cause illness in some people.

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**How is West Nile virus spread?** People mainly get West Nile virus (WNV) from the bite of an infected mosquito. After biting an infected bird, the mosquito can transmit the virus to people or other animals. The virus has also been transmitted with infected blood through transfusion. Transmission from person to person by casual contact does not occur.

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**What are the symptoms of West Nile virus?** Most people who are infected with WNV suffer no symptoms at all. WNV may cause headache, fever, swollen glands, muscle aches and often a rash. In severe cases, it may cause an infection of the brain called encephalitis.

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**Who is most at risk from West Nile virus?** People 50 years of age and older and those with health problems are most at risk for serious illness from WNV.

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**Is there a vaccine for West Nile virus?** Currently, there is no vaccine to protect people from WNV. Scientists are working to develop one in the near future.

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**Can animals become infected with West Nile**

West Nile virus infection is common in birds and horses but has also been found in cats, dogs, cattle and many other animals.

**virus?** Signs of infection in a horse may include nervousness, irritability, staggering and lack of coordination.

There is a vaccine to protect horses from WNV infection.

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**What can I do to protect myself from West Nile virus?**

Avoiding mosquito bites can greatly reduce your chance of becoming infected with West Nile virus. To avoid bites:

- ✓ Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- ✓ Avoid places where there are mosquitoes.
- ✓ Avoid being outdoors when there are a lot of mosquitoes, particularly at dusk and dawn.
- ✓ Use repellents containing DEET (30 percent or less for adults, 10 percent or less for children) or picaridin, carefully following the label instructions. IR3535 and oil of lemon eucalyptus, a plant-based repellent, has also shown to be effective at preventing mosquito bites.
- ✓ Keep screens on windows and doors in good repair.

**Use the tips below to protect yourself, your family and your community from West Nile virus and other illnesses carried by mosquitoes by reducing mosquito breeding sites.**

✓ Empty, destroy, recycle or cover containers like tires, tin cans, buckets and bottles that hold water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

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✓ Change water in pet bowls and bird baths at least once a week.

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✓ Remove or empty dishes under potted plants.

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✓ Stock ponds and ditches with native fish.

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✓ Cover unused pools.

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✓ Clean clogged rain gutters.

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✓ Repair leaky outdoor faucets.

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✓ Put special 'donuts' made with mosquito-killing bacteria in water where mosquito eggs may hatch.

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