

FIGHT the BITE!

Frequently Asked Questions West Nile Virus

How is West Nile Virus spread?

West Nile Virus is spread from mosquitoes to humans through mosquito bites.

What is the risk of catching WNV?

For most, the risk is low. Less than 1 percent of people who are bitten by mosquitoes develop severe symptoms of the disease.

Greater risk for those with outdoors exposure.

People who spend time outdoors, especially between dusk and dawn are more likely to be bitten by an infected mosquito. They should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

People over 50. Though anyone can be infected and become ill, severe illness and health problems are more common among people over 50. They should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

Risk through medical procedures is low. The risk of getting WNV through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor before surgery.

Pregnancy and nursing do not increase risk of becoming infected with WNV.

What percentage of DEET should I use?

- ✓ **Adults** – Use repellent containing up to 35% DEET.
- ✓ **Children 2 months to 12 years** – Use repellent containing no more than 10% DEET and do not apply to hands and feet.
- ✓ **Infants under 2 months** – Do NOT use DEET.

What are other personal protection products?

Oil of lemon eucalyptus and picaridin, also known as Bayrepel, may provide protection against mosquitoes. Oil of lemon eucalyptus provides protection similar to that of a product with low DEET concentrations while picaridin provides protection equivalent to products that contain similar amounts of DEET.

What can I do to prevent WNV?

The easiest and best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites. **“FIGHT THE BITE”**

Apply insect repellents. When you are outdoors, use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). Follow the directions on the package.

Cover-up from dusk to dawn. Many mosquitoes are most active from dusk through dawn. Consider staying indoors during these times or use insect repellent with DEET and wear long sleeves, pants, and socks. Light-colored clothing can help you see mosquitoes that land on you.

Install or repair screens. Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out. Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies anytime.

Remove standing water. Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, so eliminate mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flowerpots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly, drill drainage holes in tire swings so water drains out, and keep children’s wading pools empty and on their sides when not being used.

What are the symptoms of WNV?

WNV affects the central nervous system. Symptoms vary.

Mild illness in most people. Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected with WNV may have mild or no symptoms.

West Nile Fever in some people. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will display mild symptoms, including fever, headache and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms typically last a few days.

Severe symptoms in a few people. About 1 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.

How soon do infected people get sick?

People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by an infected mosquito. If you think you have WNV contact your physician.

What should I do if I find a dead bird?

Don’t handle the bird with your bare hands. Contact the Division of Wildlife Resources at 801-476-2740.

For additional information:

Call the Bear River Health Department
Logan - 435-792-6500
Brigham – 734-0845
Tremonton – 257-3318



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www.health.utah.gov/wnv