

# WEST NILE VIRUS

## PREVENTION TIPS FOR THE COMMUNITY

West Nile virus (WNV) is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. In the United States, the common house mosquito is considered to be the principal vector species. While this mosquito becomes infected by feeding on infected birds, humans cannot get WNV from handling live or dead infected birds.

The virus was detected for the first time in the Western Hemisphere in September 1999, in birds found in New York. Most infected people show no symptoms or have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches, often with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. More severe cases can include headache and high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, tremors, coma, paralysis and death. Approximately 10% of the *symptomatic* cases result in death. Fatalities are more likely in people over 50 years old.

### Tips to Lower your Risk for Mosquito Bites:



- Avoid shaded areas when mosquitoes may be resting. Limit outdoor activities in the evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- If weather permits, wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET, only as directed by the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Avoid prolonged and excessive use of DEET. Frequent application and saturation of skin do NOT increase effectiveness, but will increase likelihood of adverse reactions.
  - Do not use on infants, and avoid applying higher concentration products directly to the skin of children (apply repellent to clothing and footwear). Avoid using DEET on damaged skin (sunburn, cuts, eczema or psoriasis).
- If you are allergic or have an adverse reaction to DEET contact your physician.

- Keep your property mosquito “unfriendly” by removing all sources of standing or stagnant water where mosquito larvae can breed. Mosquitoes will develop in any standing water or puddle that lasts more than 4 days!
  - Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots and old, discarded tires. One tire can produce tens of thousands of mosquitoes in a single season.
  - Drill extra holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Inspect and clean clogged roof gutters a few times a year—roof gutters can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.
- Eliminate standing water that collects in unused wheelbarrows, plastic wading pools, birdbaths, and buckets; and cover children’s sandboxes when not in use.
- Aerate water gardens and ornamental pools, or stock them with fish.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. If you cover your pool while on vacation, remember that mosquitoes can also breed in the water that collects on the cover after it rains.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the  
New Jersey Department of Health site at:

[www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/factsheet.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/factsheet.htm)

**EDISON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**