

WEST NILE VIRUS

West Nile Virus Information

West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne infection that can cause serious illness, and in some cases, death. Although a person's chances of getting sick are small, there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

Most mosquitoes do not transmit the disease. While there are about 70 different species of mosquitoes in New York State, only certain species have been associated with West Nile virus.

All residents of areas where virus activity has been identified are at risk of getting West Nile virus; persons over 50 years of age are at the highest risk for severe disease.

What are the Symptoms of West Nile Virus?

Most people who are infected with the West Nile virus will not have any type of illness. It is estimated that 20% of the people who become infected will develop West Nile fever: mild symptoms, including fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. In many individuals, these symptoms are so mild that they go unnoticed or undetected.

The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) can include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, paralysis, and coma. It is estimated that one in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop the more severe form of the disease. Usually, symptoms occur from three to 14 days after exposure. There is no specific treatment for viral infections, other than to treat the symptoms and provide supportive care.

What is Being Done to Monitor West Nile Virus?

To assist in determining the level of risk to humans posed by West Nile Virus (WNV), the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is requesting that residents report all dead crows, blue jays, birds of prey, and ruffed grouse (partridge).

In addition to monitoring dead birds, the CCHD annually implements a mosquito surveillance program. Mosquitoes are trapped in a number of sites, and samples are sent for testing on a weekly basis.

How Should I Handle a Dead Bird?

Use rubber gloves or turn a plastic bag inside out, over your hand to pick up the bird. The best dead specimen is one that is in good condition, recently died within 24 hours, and has not died from identifiable trauma (gunshot or predator). A good specimen will generally still have its eyes. Bring the dead bird to the "contact" location show on this web page.

How can I Avoid Getting West Nile?

It is not necessary to limit any outdoor activities unless there is evidence of mosquito-borne disease in your area. However, you can always help to reduce your risk of mosquito bites by:

Wearing shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time

Considering the use of a mosquito repellent when it is necessary to be outdoors at times when mosquitoes are most active. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label

**** IMPORTANT NOTICE TO FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS ****

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE YOU ALLOWED TO ATTEMPT TO RID YOUR ESTABLISHMENT OF BUGS, PESTS, OR RODENTS BY YOUR OWN MEANS. PER THE PUBLIC HEALTH CODE, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL LICENSED PEST CONTROL COMPANY FOR THIS TASK. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR CLARIFICATION ON THIS RULE, PLEASE CONTACT US VIA THE INFORMATION BELOW.

Contact Us

To report a dead crow, blue jay, bird of prey, or ruffed grouse (partridge), call or visit us at:

Clinton County Health Department
Environmental Unit
135 Margaret Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Tel: (518) 565-4870