



# WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)

## Fight The Bite!

### Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection

When dealing with West Nile virus, prevention is your best bet. Fighting mosquito bites reduces your risk of getting this disease, along with others that mosquitoes can carry. Take the commonsense steps below to reduce your risk:

- avoid bites and illness;
- clean out the mosquitoes from the places where you work and play;
- help your community control the disease.

**Something to remember:** The chance that any one person is going to become ill from a single mosquito bite remains low. The risk of severe illness and death is highest for people over 50 years old, although people of all ages can become ill.

### Avoid Mosquito Bites



#### Apply Insect Repellent Containing DEET

(Look for: *N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide*) to exposed skin when you go outdoors. Even a short time being outdoors can be long enough to get a mosquito bite. For details on when and how to apply repellent, see [Insect Repellent Use and Safety](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm) ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm)) in our [Questions and Answers](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/q&a.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/q&a.htm>) pages. See also [Using Insect Repellent Safely](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/alpha_fs.htm) ([http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/alpha\\_fs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/alpha_fs.htm)) from the EPA.



#### Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites

When possible, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or DEET will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent containing DEET on the skin under your clothing.

Get double protection: wear long sleeves during peak mosquito biting hours, and spray DEET repellent directly onto your clothes.



#### Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak mosquito biting times for many species of mosquitoes. Take *extra* care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning -- or consider avoiding

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outdoor activities during these times.

#### Mosquito-Proof Your Home



#### Drain Standing Water

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water. Need examples? Learn more on the [Prevention of West Nile Virus](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/prevention.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/prevention.htm>) Question and Answer page.

Drain standing water from around your home



#### Install or Repair Screens

Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors. Offer to help neighbors whose screens might be in bad shape.

#### Help Your Community



#### Report Dead Birds to Local Authorities

Dead birds may be a sign that West Nile virus is circulating between birds and the mosquitoes in an area. Over [130 species](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/birdspecies.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/birdspecies.htm>) of birds are known to have been infected with West Nile virus, though not all infected birds will die. It's important to remember that birds die from many other causes besides West Nile virus.

By reporting dead birds to state and local health departments, you can play an important role in monitoring West Nile virus. State and local agencies have different policies for collecting and testing birds, so check the [Links to State and Local Government Sites](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm) ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city\\_states.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm)) page to find information about reporting dead birds in your area. [Click here for more info about reporting dead birds and dealing with bird carcasses.](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv_birds.htm) ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv\\_birds.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv_birds.htm))



#### Mosquito Control Programs

Check with local health authorities to see if there is an organized mosquito control program in your area. If no program exists, work with your [local government](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm) ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city\\_states.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm)) officials to establish a program. The [American Mosquito Control Association](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a_gotolink=http://www.mosquito.org/) ([http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a\\_gotolink=http://www.mosquito.org/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a_gotolink=http://www.mosquito.org/)) can provide advice, and their book *Organization for Mosquito Control* is a useful reference.

More questions about mosquito control? A source for information about pesticides and repellents is the

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## **Fight The Bite!**

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#### [National Pesticide Information Center](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a_gotolink=http://npic.orst.edu/)

([http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a\\_gotolink=http://npic.orst.edu/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/cdclinkdisclaimer.asp?a_gotolink=http://npic.orst.edu/)), which also operates a toll-free information line: 1-800-858-7378 (check their Web site for hours).



#### **Clean Up**

Mosquito breeding sites can be anywhere. Neighborhood clean up days can be organized by civic or youth organizations to pick up containers from vacant lots and parks, and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water. Mosquitoes don't care about fences, so it's important to control breeding sites throughout the neighborhood.



#### **Find out more about local prevention efforts**

Find state and local West Nile virus information and contacts on the [Links to State and Local Government Sites](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm) ([http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city\\_states.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm)) page.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/westnile](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile), or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).