

Frequently Asked Questions

What is West Nile Virus?

- ◆ It is a virus carried by certain species of mosquitoes that pick up the virus after biting an infected bird. The virus is mainly transmitted between birds and mosquitoes.

Is West Nile Virus Seasonal?

- ◆ West Nile Virus occurs primarily in the late summer or early fall.

Is there a vaccine?

- ◆ Currently there is no vaccine available.

** Please Note: West Nile Virus is preventable by taking some simple precautions.*

Symptoms of West Nile Virus

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Body aches
- ◆ Occasionally a rash on the trunk of the body.
- ◆ Neck stiffness
- ◆ Most people who are infected with the virus will not have any type of illness.
- ◆ Persons over 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.
- ◆ The average time from infection to onset of disease symptoms is usually 3-14 days.
- ◆ Symptoms of mild disease will generally last a few days.
- ◆ Symptoms of severe disease may last several weeks.

Protection and Prevention

**Consult with your physician about which repellent to use!*

- ◆ Wear insect repellent that contains DEET. Please use repellents according to manufacturer's instructions.
- ◆ Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
- ◆ Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening. These are peak mosquito biting times.
- ◆ Install or repair window and door screens.
- ◆ Drain sources of standing water such as...
 - ✓ Empty bird baths, swimming pool covers, unused swimming pools, garbage barrels, flowerpots, and buckets.
 - ✓ Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out.
 - ✓ Remove discarded tires and other items that could collect water.
 - ✓ Turn over plastic wading pools, buckets, and wheelbarrows when not in use.

What do you do if you find a dead bird?

- ◆ Call the Health Department for further instructions.
- ◆ Do not touch any dead animal with bare hands.
- ◆ If instructed by the Health Department to dispose of the bird, use rubber gloves or double plastic bags over your hands to place the dead animal in double plastic trash bags and then in a garbage can.
- ◆ Wash hands with soap and warm water afterwards.



Important Phone Number and Resources

Massachusetts Department of Public Health - *West Nile Virus Hotline*
1-866-627-7968

Methuen Department of Public Health

978-983-8655

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

WWW.EPA.GOV

Centers for Disease Control

WWW.CDC.GOV

Methuen Residents Guide To

WEST NILE VIRUS



Produced and Sponsored by

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in collaboration with
The Methuen Public Health
Department

&
The University of Massachusetts
Lowell
Senior Nursing Students