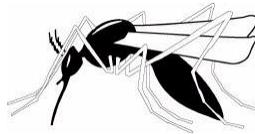


**Cook County
Department of Public Health**

Wants you to know about

West Nile Virus

Fight the Bite!



**What Is West Nile Virus?
(WNV)**

West Nile virus is an infection carried by mosquitoes. In the past, **WNV** was found in Africa, the Middle East and in parts of Europe, Russia, India and Indonesia. **WNV** may have entered the United State through an infected traveler, bird or mosquito and first appeared here, on the East Coast of the United States, in 1999.

People get **WNV** from the bite of a mosquito that is infected with the virus. Mosquitoes become infected with **WNV** when they feed on infected birds that carry the virus in their blood. Once infected, the mosquito can spread the virus to humans and other animals.

Symptoms

Most people infected with **WNV** have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. Some people may become ill 3-15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include fever, headache, rash and body aches. More severe symptoms may be a high fever, stiff neck, confusion and muscle weakness.

Who Can Get WNV?

Anybody can become infected with **WNV** so it's important to protect yourself from mosquito bites by following the important information in this brochure. People over the age of 50 and those with chronic diseases such as heart disease or cancer

may be more at risk for serious illness. Most human cases occur in the late summer of early fall.

Treatment

No specific treatment or vaccine for **WNV** exists. In severe cases, hospitalization may be necessary. If you believe you may have been infected, **call your doctor.**

How Can I Fight The Bite?

Don't allow mosquitoes to breed! Look around the outside of your home and get rid of any containers that may hold water such as: trash cans, old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums or bottles.

- Empty plastic wading pools two times weekly, or store upside down when not in use.
- Change water two times weekly in birdbaths and plant saucers.
- Store boats covered or upside down.
- Water bowls for pets should be emptied and refilled daily.
- Limit time outdoors when mosquito activity is heaviest (dusk to dawn).
- If outside, wear socks, shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Loose-fitting, light colored clothing is best.
- Use repellents containing 25-35% DEET. *Always follow label directions.*
- Talk to your doctor before applying repellent to infants or children.
- Protect babies and small children by using mosquito netting over strollers.

Also.....

- Keep weeds and grass cut short.
- Be sure screens in homes are in good repair and tight fitting.
- Keep gutters clean and in good repair.

What If I Find A Dead Bird?

Monitoring dead bird locations is a priority for CCDPH. The presence of dead crows and blue jays in a community is a sign of possible **WNV** in the area. If you find a dead bird, especially blue jay or crow, please call **708-492-2650** to report your sighting. Or, you may download a reporting form at:

www.cookcountypublichealth.org/programs/eni/wnv/west.shtml

CCDPH staff will tell you if they need to pick up the bird for laboratory testing. Information regarding proper methods for handling and disposing of a dead bird is also available at this phone number. CCDPH is committed to protecting your health. We will continue to work with private medical providers, hospitals, laboratories, the state health department and the Center for Disease Control to detect the presence of West Nile infection in our community.

Check the areas around the outside of your home for places that mosquitoes may breed. Water should be emptied from garbage cans, buckets, cans, birdbaths and planters. Empty unused swimming pools. Remove old tires.

For more information contact:

Cook County Department of Public Health
Main Number: **708-492-2000**
Health Alert Hotline (recorded message line):
708-492-2185
To report a dead bird:
708-492-2650

Web address:
www.cookcountypublichealth.org

Illinois Department of Public Health
www.idph.state.il.us

National Center for Infectious Diseases
P. O. Box 2087
Fort Collins, CO 80522
Email: dvbid@cdc.gov
Website: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/dvbid.htm

Cook County Department of Public Health
Protecting the health and environment of suburban Cook County
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Cook County Board of Commissioners
Robert Simon, M.D., Interim Chief, Bureau of Health Services
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