

West Nile Virus (WNV) Fact Sheet for Campers

Where Has It Been and Where Is It Going?



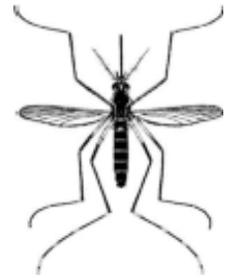
West Nile virus (WNV) is commonly found in Africa, Eastern Europe, West Asia, and the Middle East. It was first detected in the United States in 1999 during an outbreak in New York. By mid-June of 2002, it had traveled to the eastern portion of Texas. Since then, it has been reported in mosquitoes, birds (such as blue jays and crows), horses, and humans in Texas. There has also been a continued westward movement of the virus. Anyone taking part in outdoor activities should take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

What Are The Symptoms Of West Nile Virus?

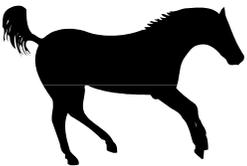
Most people infected with WNV will not show symptoms. Some, however, may have a fever, headache, body aches, and swollen lymph nodes. A small number may develop encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord). Although rare, death can occur.

How Is It Spread?

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. People and animals acquire WNV from mosquitoes, not from other people or animals. Mosquitoes are not active at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening.



Can Animals Be Infected With WNV?



Yes. However, the only domestic animals that appear to be harmfully affected by WNV are equines, such as horses. Some species of wild birds may become very ill and die.

Can It Be Treated?

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In a serious case, a person may have to be hospitalized and given supportive treatment along with good nursing care.

How Can I Reduce My Chances Of Being Infected?

1. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
2. Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin. Repellents containing DEET are effective. Repellents may bother the eyes and mouth, so do not touch these areas if you have repellent on your hands.
3. Spray clothing with insect repellents containing permethrin or DEET, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.
4. Whenever you use an insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the directions for use that are printed on the product label.
5. Although it does not appear that a person can get WNV from handling live or dead infected birds, it would be wise to use gloves or double plastic bags when handling any dead animals, including birds.
6. Make sure tent openings have flaps and cabin doors and windows have screens to keep mosquitoes from entering.

