

How to Avoid Mosquito Bites



- Stay indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early morning.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks whenever you are outdoors.
- Use insect repellent products with no more than 35% DEET for adults and follow the directions on the label.
- Use insect repellent products with no more than 10% DEET for children and follow the directions on the label. *Bite Blocker for Kids*, is an effective alternative for children if you choose not to use DEET.

West Nile Virus Current Events

- State wide, New Mexico has seen West Nile Virus in all but a few counties.
- In 2003, New Mexico reported 201 human cases of West Nile Virus, 33 of which were in Bernalillo County.
- In 2003, there were four human fatalities from West Nile Virus in New Mexico; Chavez County San Miguel, and two in Sandoval County.
- In 2003, there were 399 cases of Equine (horse) West Nile Virus in New Mexico. There were 34 reported cases of Equine West Nile Virus in Bernalillo County.

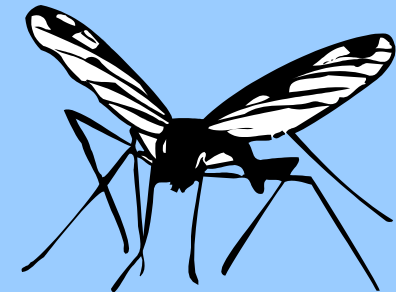
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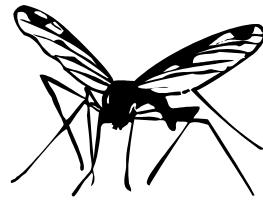
Understanding, Preventing and Controlling

WEST NILE VIRUS

**Bernalillo County
Office of Environmental Health**



Important Facts About West Nile Virus



What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a virus that can cause disease in people, birds, horses and other animals. The virus is spread only by mosquito bites.

How do people become infected with West Nile Virus?

People can become infected with the virus through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by the virus from feeding on birds that have the virus in their blood. Once a mosquito is infected, it can transmit the virus to humans, birds, horses or other animals through a bite.

Can you get West Nile Virus directly from people, birds or other animals?

The virus is **NOT** spread from person-to-person (through touch or by kissing). There is also no evidence to suggest that a person can get the virus by touching a dead bird or other animal.

What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus?

Most people who have been bitten by a mosquito do not develop any symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they usually appear about 3 to 14 days after a person has been bitten. Mild illness includes fever, headache, and body aches. In a small number of cases, the disease can affect the central nervous system causing high fever, stiff neck, muscle weakness, disorientation, brain inflammation (encephalitis), coma, and death.

Is there a treatment for West Nile Virus?

There is no treatment for the virus. Most people with mild illness recover in a few days. In more severe cases, patients are treated with supportive therapy, which can include hospitalization, intravenous fluids, and respiratory support.

Is there a vaccine to prevent West Nile Virus?

There is no vaccine to prevent the virus for humans; however, there is one for horses.

The Importance of Controlling Mosquitoes

- Mosquitoes carry diseases such as encephalitis, malaria and dog heartworm.
- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing or slow moving water. Weeds, tall grass and bushes provide shelter for mosquitoes.

Controlling Mosquitoes Around Your Home

- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Dispose of tires, buckets, ceramic pots, plastic containers and similar water-holding containers.
- Keep water-holding swamp cooler units clean.
- Tightly cover cisterns and all water storage containers.
- Clean rain gutters regularly.
- Empty and wash birdbaths and wading pools.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools; drain water from pool covers.
- Stock garden ponds with mosquito fish. They eat the mosquito eggs and larvae.
- Remove weeds and brush that provide resting places for adult mosquitoes.
- Do not over-irrigate your fields, pastures, or gardens.
- Clean vegetation and debris from canals, ditches, laterals, and drains.