

West Nile Virus Disease Fact Sheet

What is West Nile Virus (WNV)?

- ⇒ Infectious viral disease spread by mosquitoes (*Culex sp.*).
- ⇒ Seasonal epidemic in New York State that starts in the summer and continues into fall.

What are the symptoms of WNV?

Serious Symptoms: 1 in 150 WNV infected people will develop severe symptoms such as high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, numbness and paralysis. These could last for several weeks and cause permanent nerve issues.

Milder Symptoms: Up to 20% of WNV infected will have fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. This can last for few days to several weeks.

No Symptoms: 80% of WNV infected will not show any symptoms and there is no way to know if they will develop illness or not.

How is WNV transmitted?

- ⇒ Infected mosquitoes (**Fig.1**).
- ⇒ Transfusions, transplants and mother-to-child.
- ⇒ **CANNOT** spread through touching/contact.

How is WNV Disease treated?

- ⇒ **NO** human vaccine or treatment available.
- ⇒ In severe cases supportive care would include in-



Figure 2. Common backyard mosquito sources.

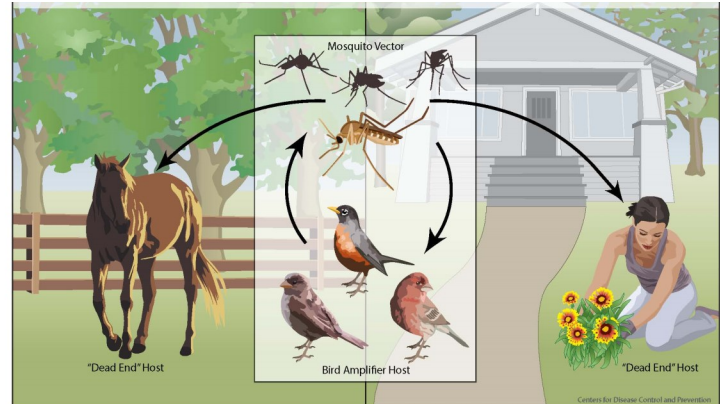


Figure 1. WNV disease is transmitted by the *Culex* mosquito. Source: *Centers for Disease Control (CDC)*.

travenous fluids and breathing assistance.

How do I prevent WNV?

Best way: Prevent mosquito bites. You can do this by

- ⇒ Avoiding outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- ⇒ Dress with long sleeves and pants to cover as much skin as possible.
- ⇒ Use mosquito repellent with DEET, picardin, oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always follow label instructions.
- ⇒ Eliminate sources of standing water (**Fig.2**).
- ⇒ Repair window and screen doors to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

What else should I know?

- ⇒ Birds can be infected with WNV and serve as a source to infect mosquitoes which then spread it to humans.
- ⇒ If you find a dead bird, **DO NOT** handle it with your bare hands.

For more information on WNV go to:

[CDC webpage](#)

[NYSDOH webpage](#)

Contact the Health Department:
716-701-3419



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