

This brochure is intended to provide you with a brief background about the West Nile Virus; how to prevent mosquito breeding; and steps you can take to protect yourself if it is found in your area.

What is the West Nile Virus?

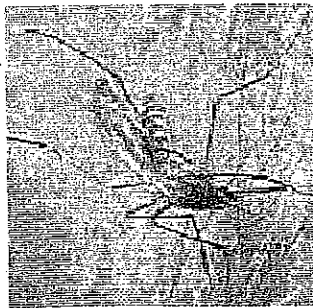
The West Nile Virus, previously only found in Africa, Eastern Europe and West Asia, appeared last summer in New York. It is carried by a certain kind of mosquito that infects birds, animals and people.

This virus can cause encephalitis, which is an infection of the brain.

Although this virus has not been found in Pennsylvania, there is a chance that it will spread into the state this summer.

West Nile encephalitis cases occur

primarily in the late summer or early fall, although the peak season is usually April-October. The virus is spread primarily by the Northern house mosquito after it feeds on infected birds and then bites people or other animals. It is not spread by person-to-person contact. There is no evidence that people can get the disease by handling infected animals.



Last summer in New York City, seven of the 61 people infected with the virus died. All of the people who died from the virus were age 75 or older.

Who is most at risk?

People over 50 years of age have the highest risk of developing severe illness because as we age, our bodies have a harder time fighting off disease. People with compromised immune systems are also at risk; however, anyone can get the virus.

What are the symptoms?

People with mild infections may experience fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands. People with more severe infections may experience high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, occasional convulsions and paralysis. If you have any of these symptoms, contact your doctor.

Is there treatment?

There is no specific therapy for West Nile virus infection. While most people fully recover from the virus, in some severe cases hospitalization may be needed.

How can I prevent mosquitoes from breeding?

Any time is a good time to eliminate areas where mosquitoes breed. Tear off this sheet and put it on your refrigerator for easy reference!

- ✓ Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water holding containers that have accumulated on your property;
- ✓ Pay special attention to discarded tires on your property;
- ✓ Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors;
- ✓ Clean clogged roof gutters;
- ✓ Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use;
- ✓ Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish;
- ✓ Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used; and
- ✓ Use landscaping to eliminate standing water on your property.