

# Fight the Bite!

## Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection



Human illness from West Nile virus is rare, even in areas where the virus has been reported. The chance that any one person is going to become ill from a mosquito bite is low.

### Three Ways to Reduce your West Nile Virus Risk

1. Avoid Mosquito Bites
2. Mosquito-Proof Your Home
3. Help Your Community

#### Avoid Mosquito Bites!



**Apply Insect Repellent Containing DEET** (Look for: *N,N-diethyl-metoluamide*) to exposed skin when you go outdoors. Even a short time sitting outdoors can be long enough to get a mosquito bite. For details on

when and how to apply repellent, see CDC's Insect Repellent Use and Safety page: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect\\_repellent.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm) .

**Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** When possible, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or DEET will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent containing DEET on the skin under your clothing.

**Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours.** The hours from dusk to dawn are peak mosquito biting times. Consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times -- or take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning.

#### Mosquito-Proof Your Home

**Drain Standing Water:** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water. Need examples? Learn more on the Prevention of West Nile Virus question and answer page: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/prevention.htm>

**Install or Repair Screens.** Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having well-fitting screens on both windows and doors. Offer to help neighbors whose screens might be in bad shape.

#### Help Your Community

**Clean Up.** Mosquito breeding sites can be everywhere. Neighborhood clean up days can be organized by civic or youth organizations to pick up containers from vacant lots, parks and to encourage people to keep their yards free of standing water. Mosquitoes don't care about fences, so breeding sites anywhere in the neighborhood are important.

**Report Dead Birds to Local Authorities.** Dead birds may be a sign that West Nile virus is circulating between birds and the mosquitoes in an area. Over 110 species of birds are known to have been infected with West Nile virus, though not all infected birds will die.

By reporting dead birds to state and local health departments, the public plays an important role in monitoring West Nile virus. Because state and local agencies have different policies for collecting and testing birds check the Links to State and Local Government Sites page to find information about reporting dead birds in your area:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city\\_states.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/city_states.htm) . This page contains more information about reporting dead birds and dealing with bird carcasses:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv\\_birds.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv_birds.htm)

**Mosquito Control Programs.** Check with local health authorities to see if there is an organized mosquito control program in your area. If no program exists, work with your local government officials to establish a program. The American Mosquito Control Association ([www.mosquito.org](http://www.mosquito.org)) can provide advice, and their book Organization for Mosquito Control is a useful reference. More questions about mosquito control? A source for information about pesticides and repellents is the National Pesticide Information Center: <http://npic.orst.edu/> , which also operates a toll-free information line: 1-800-858-7378 (check their Web site for hours).

**Find out more about local prevention efforts.** Find state and local West Nile virus information and contacts on the Links to State and Local Government Sites page.